

THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL GAY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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JUNE 2017 ISSUE 242

GET YA TATS OUT!

*We take a look
at tattoo folk
in the region*



*16-page Pride
picture special!*



**FOOD
VIRAL
GADGETS
WHAT'S ON
COMPETITIONS**

MICKEY TAYLOR

*Birmingham's star of porn
and pop talks all things tats!*



XXL THE ALBUM

MIXED BY MARK AMES & PAUL MORRELL

FEATURING TRACKS FROM KYLIE MINOGUE, OLIVER HELDENS, BOY GEORGE, TORI AMOS, TIESTO, NEW ORDER, KRYDER, AFROJACK & HARDWELL, U2, 7TH HEAVEN, RUFF DRIVERS, GEORGIO MORODER ++ MANY MORE!

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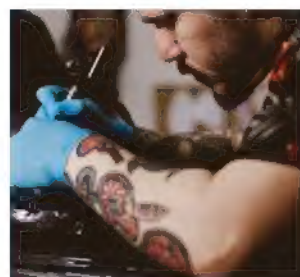
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What's On

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Pride's Got Talent contest returns ahead of **Warwickshire Pride 2017**

Warwickshire Pride organisers say that this year's Pride's Got Talent competition will be the biggest and best in the event's four-year history.

Taking place on Friday 30 June at the Episode Hotel, the contest will once again be searching for a superstar to grace the main stage at this year's Warwickshire Pride festival.

The competition's judging panel this year includes drag queen Sassi Afrika and musician C4Z. The judges will provide their feedback on all the acts, and the audience will then vote to decide who wins.

The successful contestant will receive a headline slot on the main stage at the Warwickshire Pride festival in August. For more information, visit warwickshirepride.co.uk



Shrewsbury LGBT community in search of carnival float members

Leading members of community group LGBT Shrewsbury are on the lookout for LGBTs to join them in their annual Shrewsbury Carnival float entry.

Organisers of the carnival describe the event as 'a fun and lively way of bringing positive messages about being LGBT to thousands of citizens of all ages, some of whom will be questioning now or in the future'.

The group is looking for 30 people to make the entry a 'vibrant success'.

If you're interested in taking part, you can sign up by sending an email to pg.cymru@hotmail.co.uk The event takes place in Shrewsbury on Saturday 17 June.

Have ya heard?



Love and Unity at Brum Pride

...even though attendance drops by 20%

Birmingham Pride organisers have hailed this year's event another success, despite security concerns which followed the tragic event in Manchester.

Whilst numbers were around 20% down on previous years, Lawrence Barton, Birmingham Pride Festival Director, remained upbeat: "The week leading up to the Pride weekend was one of the most challenging, indeed we are indebted to both West Midlands Police and the security teams deployed, who collectively ensured it was another safe and happy Pride for everyone to enjoy."

"I would like to thank everybody who showed such unity by turning up to both the Parade and also the Festival and I'm immensely proud of everyone who took part."

Dates for next year's Festival have been confirmed as 26 and 27 May 2018.

Queer Question Time: Do you know who you're voting for?

With a snap general election taking place this month, have you decided who's getting your vote yet? The country is more divided than ever, and this year's election is set to be one of the most heated for a generation.

That's why you might want to pop along to Queer Question Time at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in Centenary Square.

Taking a format based on BBC One's Question Time programme, the event provides members of the LGBT community with the chance to grill candidates from the main political parties.

Human rights and LGBT campaigner Peter Tatchell (pictured) will also be on the panel. Queer Question Time takes place in the Studio Theatre at The REP, Birmingham, on Tuesday 6 June at 7.30pm. It's a free event but tickets must be booked in advance at The REP box office - 0121 245 4455 - or online at birmingham-rep.co.uk



Coventry to get new gay bar and club this month!

Coventry's gay scene will double in size this month when an all-new gay venue opens in the city.

The Yard, located at 11-12 Bull Yard and formerly a bar called Glasshouse, will be officially opened on Friday 9 June by Holyoaks star Kieron Richardson.

The following night sees award-winning Pink tribute act Vicky Jackson taking to the stage.

A daytime LGBT stand-up event on the Sunday, presented as part of Coventry Pride, will be followed in the evening by cabaret from local drag star Fanny Burns. Search 'The Yard Coventry' on Facebook for more information.

Bar Diva brings gay scene cabaret to Dudley



An all-new gay bar opened in Dudley last month. Situated in the Black Country town's King Street, Bar Diva's tagline is 'be yourself'. The venue plans to host numerous cabaret acts, presented alongside great music and attractive drinks offers. For more information, visit bardiva.co.uk or call 01384 259684.



Walsall Pride Ball - black-tie event returns to raise cash for Pride festival

This month sees the return of the annual Walsall Pride Ball, taking place at the town's Arbor Lights restaurant on Friday 30 June from 8pm.

Not only will a ticket to the event get you a slap-up three-course Black Country-themed meal, it will also buy you a whole bunch of entertainment, from performances by Ego Dance and hostess & DJ Glamour to the live drag cabaret magic of Sandra (pictured).

Tickets cost £35 and are now on sale from Arbor Lights and local gay bars The Red Lion and The Lion. For more information, give Walsall Pride a ring on 01922 613361 or visit walsallpride.org. All profits raised go to the Walsall Pride festival.



Rainbow Voices announces summer concert



Midlands LGBT choir Rainbow Voices has announced details of its annual summer concert.

Entitled Diversity And Harmony, the show will take place at the Hagley Road Village in Birmingham's Edgbaston district on Saturday 22 July. And to give the whole shindig a little more sparkle, the choir has roped in popular local comedian Barbara Nice as compere. If you're keen to enjoy a summertime sing-song, tickets are available now from rainbowvoices.bpt.me. They cost £7 in advance or £8.50 on the door.

Have ya heard?



Jinkx Monsoon heads to the Midlands

Following on from a hugely successful Australian tour and sell-out runs off-Broadway and at London's Soho Theatre, RuPaul's Drag Race winner Jinkx Monsoon is heading out on a 20-date tour in November.

Jinkx will appear in The Vaudevillians, 'a vintage cabaret with a twist of drag' that co-stars composer and musician Major Scales.

A huge favourite when she appeared in global TV phenomenon RuPaul's Drag Race, Jinkx is the sassy alter-ego of Portland-born Jerick Hoffer. Major Scales, meanwhile, is the evil twin of Seattle-based musician, writer and performer Richard Andriessen.

The Vaudevillians visits Stafford Gatehouse on 5 November, Leicester's Y Theatre on 25 November and Nottingham's Glee Club on 5 December.



Charlotte Church's Pride baby joy!

When crowds flocked to see Charlotte Church and her Late Night Pop Dungeon Tour on the Birmingham Pride Main Stage last month, they certainly got more than they'd bargained for...

The show was fantastic, the dance moves were great, and boy, can Charlotte sing - but what fans didn't expect from the Cardiff-born vocalist was a live-on-stage announcement that she's pregnant with her third child! Charlotte proudly danced around the stage, showing off her baby bump for the whole of Birmingham Pride to see - what a great place to announce such special news! Congratulations, Charlotte!

XXL: The Album released!



If you're a fan of XXL, the award-winning gay men's club night that takes place not only in London but also right here in the Midlands (at Birmingham's Core Club), then you're in for a real treat, because they've just released their own album! XXL: The Album features not one but two mixes, allowing you to throw your own mini XXL party at home! The first mix, by event founder Mark Ames, focuses on XXL favourites and classics. The second provides a more upfront house menu, mixed by XXL's resident DJ and producer, Paul Morrell. Grab the album now from Spotify, Apple Music, iTunes and Google Play.



marks the spot...

It's not so much 'flaming' June as 'flaming heck, we've got to go back to the ballot-box again!' June. Yes indeed, Prime Minister Theresa May is requesting that we yet again have a good ol' think about where we want to stick our thingy. She's absolutely desperate that we give it to her - our vote, we mean - and is joined in her desire to have an X mark her spot by Labour's Jeremy Corbyn and the Lib Dem's Tim Farron (and some other leaders too, but for the sake of brevity let's stick to this unholy trinity, shall we?).

So who's going to bag your vote on the eighth of the month? Strong-and-stable Theresa, Red Jezza or Timmy Two Times (can we have a second referendum, please) Farron?

Well, before dropping into your friendly neighbourhood polling station to discharge your 'democratic duty', maybe you should take a moment to contemplate what each of the three leaders has done for the LGBT community (or not, as the case may be). Check out the next page to see who's been most LGBT-friendly down the years...



Voting stance on LGBT issues

Theresa May - Conservative

Famous for having once described the Tories as 'the nasty party', Theresa used to be a wee bit on the nasty side herself - at least where supporting gay rights was concerned. She voted against both same-sex couples' right to adopt and parity in the age of consent. She was also conspicuous by her absence for votes on the Gender Recognition Bill, the Equality Act and the repeal of Section 28. She's not an altogether bad lass, though, having flown her rainbow flag in the name of civil partnerships. She also oversaw this year's introduction of 'the Alan Turing law', which saw gay men who'd been convicted of homosexuality before it was decriminalised receive a full pardon.



Jeremy Corbyn - Labour

Labour's bearded wonder loves campaigning on behalf of minority groups, so it's not surprising that he's seen it, done it and bought the rainbow t-shirt when it comes to supporting LGBT rights. He's given his thumbs-up to all the pro-gay legislation into which Mrs May has dug her leopard-print kitten heels, and has been banging the drum on our behalf for more years than the prime minister has made U-turns.



Tim Farron - Lib Dems

Timbo got himself tangled up in a pink web of controversy at the beginning of the election campaign, when he couldn't stop banging on about a second referendum for long enough to utter the words, "No, I don't have a problem with gay sex". However, there was more to his unwillingness to clarify his position on all matters homosexual than his obsession with trying to keep us in the EU. Tim's a Christian - and judging by his initial evasiveness when asked for his views on gay sex, he's one who's had a bit of a problem with some aspects of the LGBT lifestyle. That said, he did eventually say that his Christian values were in no way affronted by gay sex - and to give the fella his due, it should also be noted that he came out in favour of same-sex marriage.



So there you have it. The battle lines have been drawn and the choice is yours.

A recent mygayvote.co.uk analysis has revealed that, when it comes to LGBT-focused legislation, we've received on average 31% support from the Tories, 96% from Labour and 95% from the Lib Dems.

There are, of course, other parties to vote for instead of the above three, and at the end of the day we must each follow either our conscience or our gut instinct. Whoever tickles your fancy and for whatever the reason, the important thing is to make sure you get along to your polling station on the eighth of this month. Your country, as they say, needs you...

Get along to Queer Question Time at the Birmingham REP Theatre on Tuesday 6 June. See p5 for more information.

Local Life Story

Name: James Cowper
(Gavina Vagina)

Place of birth: Redditch

Star sign: Virgo

Age: 29 - I expect gasps of shock and disbelief!

About James Cowper

Where did you grow up?

My parents and I lived in Kidderminster.

Single or attached?

Happily restrained.

What makes you happy?

Chris, our dogs, entertaining people, being creative and having a project to apply my brain to.

What makes you sad?

Loss, animal cruelty and the thought of someone elderly being on their own.

What makes you angry?

Homophobia, being lied to and people with no 'get up and go', which probably also includes stupid people!

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

I can be very driven and outspoken. Perhaps at

times a longer fuse and more patience would create a happier environment for those around me.

What's been the most embarrassing thing you've done in your life?

I may as well say it before someone else does. I was judging as Gavina for the final of The C Factor at The Village Inn a couple of weeks ago. I didn't realise until I got there that the rubber grip on the bottom of my heels had come off. I was panicking that at any moment I was going to fall (something I have NEVER done in heels!). I was called to the stage to be introduced. I got up, said hello, stepped off and splat, down like a sack of s*at! In front of a bar packed full of people! I guess it will give people something to talk about for a few weeks.

Now that same-sex marriage has been legalised, would you consider getting married?

Absolutely. In fact, Chris and I are engaged; we just haven't set a date yet, as we've both been incredibly busy with work.

Coming Out

When did you first know you were gay?

Looking back now, I realise that I knew when I was around 12 years old.

When did you come out?

When I was at college at the age of 17. I can actually remember the night I accepted it. It had been going back and forth in my mind - was this actually me, or is my head wired wrong or something? I can vividly remember lying on my bedroom floor, blasting out on repeat the Marilyn Manson song

(I had a phase!), Personal Jesus. After a couple of hours, I sort of accepted it. I went to college the next day and told a friend. Her response was, 'Oh, okay', then she gave me a hug and asked if I wanted to go for a coffee, as if nothing had changed. It was the BIGGEST relief of my life and probably one of the most liberating things I've ever done.

What was school like for you as a gay teenager?

I wasn't out at school, but I guess looking back I was gay, I just hadn't accepted it. But it was difficult! I was this somewhat camp, ginger guy who wasn't into sports, which in a private school is three massive things going against you!

What would you say to a youngster trying to come to terms with their own sexuality?

You can only accept it in your own time, no matter what other people say to you. There's no textbook answer about how long it takes. But remember that although some people aren't as accepting of it, there are always people - friends and family - who will support you and be there for you when you need them, and who are willing to go at your pace. Being yourself is a fantastic feeling!

Your Career

When you were younger, what did you want to be?

I wanted to work in robotics and the development of cybernetics (the amalgamation of man and machine).

What was your first job when you left school?

Till-tart at Focus DIY.

What is your role at Glamorous?

My official role is simply a drag DJ and host. Recently I've become more involved, as I've been designing and project-managing their refurbishment. It's a

Quickfire

Who's your favourite actor?

At the moment, Cumberbatch or Redmayne - too close to call!

What's your favourite book?

Google!

Half empty or half full?

Half full. There's always a way!

What's your favourite food?

Smoked salmon.

And how about your favourite drink?

Malibu & Coke.

Madonna or Lady Gaga?

Eurgh! Gaga, if I had to say one!

If you could take a selfie with one person, alive or dead, who would it be?

My nanny.

project that I'm incredibly proud of. I'm also a freelance graphic designer, so I do their artwork and promotional materials too.

Missing Bar is my first base, though. It's the first bar I worked in when I first decided to start making a move to Birmingham from home. I started as a barman, then moved on to being the venue's marketing & events manager, as well as DJing for them. I stopped the marketing when other personal projects started taking up more of my time. I now just have drag and DJ residencies there. But it always has a special place in my heart, and whenever I'm needed, I'm more than happy to assist - particularly around Pride time, when there's woodwork and construction to be done. Jack of all trades, me!

What are the highlights?

My personal highlight, if I'm on stage or DJing, is having people come up to me at the end of a shift, offering me their hand, thanking me for a fantastic night and saying that they're looking forward to coming back again.

With regard to Gavina, how did you come up with your look?

It's developed over the years into something I'm now pretty happy with. It's not the best,

but it's not the worst. Originally, it was very Twiggy-esque, but now it's something a bit tamer, although still with big, over-the-top eyes.

How did you come up with the name Gavina Vagina?

For the life of me, I can't remember. I do sometimes wish it was different, though. When reading it, people pronounce it wrong, but it had already begun to stick by the time I felt it was a problem. I guess it's an instant way to start a conversation with people, trying to get them to say it correctly. However, thanks to a friend's suggestion, in times of need I just tell them my name is Auntie Vag!

Gay Scene

How long have you been frequenting the Midlands gay scene?

Twelve years now

And what's been your fondest memory of the gay scene?

Skint at DV8 would be one of them. It was the first gay bar or club I ever set foot in. I remember walking inside to this thumpa-thumpa, as I call it - the bass beat hitting you in the chest. The music was fantastic. The crowds were dancing - men with men, women with women - there were coloured lights everywhere and topless podium dancers. It was like throwing a

kid into a sweet shop. It was the most incredible sight I'd ever seen - something I'll never forget.

Who's your favourite cabaret act on the scene?

It has to be Twiggy, without a shadow of a doubt - the first drag I ever saw or met. A true inspiration to my own character and to drag culture itself. Twiggy always did it first!

Who's your favourite person on the gay scene?

What a horrible question! I don't do favourites - I hate everyone equally!

What do you most enjoy about the scene?

Pride - although it's bloody hard work for those of us who're part of planning, organising and working on it.

What have you noticed about the way the gay scene's changed over the years?

Gay isn't GAY anymore! Well, not like it used to be. I don't get the same thumpa-thumpa as I did. Music changes, trends change and I get that. But it's a shame to think that what I felt when I first stepped into a gay club won't be how someone else new will see and feel it. But hey, Steps are back, so you never know!



Time Out

Where do you like to go on a night out?

It doesn't matter, so long as I've got my friends with me. They know who they are!

What do you do to relax? Sleep!

What do you enjoy on telly? Anything science-fiction, action-based or educational in the science area. Space is a particular favourite!

What was the last album or track you bought? Steps' Tears On The Dancefloor

Which one website do you spend the most time on? Ebay.

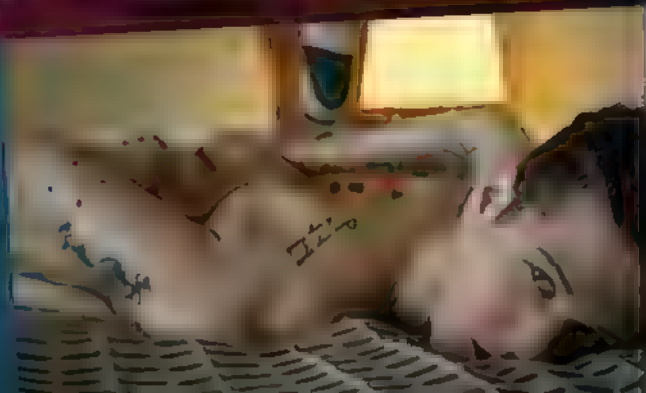
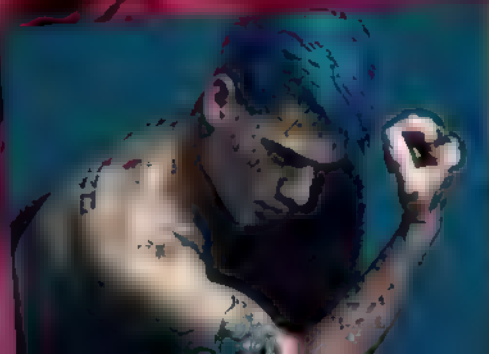
What type of holiday do you prefer?

Transatlantic, beach, all-inclusive with good food.

A portrait of Mickey Taylor, a young man with a shaved head, wearing a gold crown and a red garment. He has visible tattoos on his chest and arms. The background is dark blue.

**Mickey
Taylor**
talks tattoos,
music and
Grindr.

Porn to pop...



As a porn star, Mickey Taylor has worked with some of 'the biggest names in the biggest studios in the UK'. His entrepreneurial skills have seen him launch his own clothing line, calendar and books, while as a solo singer he already has two albums under his belt. We recently caught up with the boy from Essex to talk tattoos, music and Pride...

When and what was your first tattoo, Mickey?

When I was about 13 or 14 years old, I had 'Mum' tattooed on my left palm. It was a cool one to have

A lot of your tattoos are black. Do you think you'll introduce other colours?

I just like black, grey and white. Not only in tattoos but also in fashion. A lot of the clothes I wear are black. I just like the look of it. I did have a few little bits of colour here and there, but that's as good as it will ever get.

As you cover more of your body with tattoos, will you get pickier about designs?

I'll probably get looser with the designs. When you've had your first few, I think you panic about what's going in your body, and for months and months you figure out how and where you want it, asking your friends. But then the more you have, the more you just think, it's just another tattoo. Whatever I get next will be whatever I feel like on the day, I guess.

How many tattoos do you have?

About 100. That's individual ones. Now they're starting to blend together, so the number is going down.

Have you got a favourite?

It's the one I got recently. It's the microphone on my throat, which I had done in February. Everyone was telling me it was going to hurt and that I was going to be in a lot of pain, but it really wasn't that bad. The front was easy, the back, harder

Is there anything you'd go to see the tattoo fixers for?

I would never go to the tattoo fixers. Their reputation is so bad.

Is there anything you'd like to have covered up?

I want to get my chest tattoo fixed. There are three or four and they don't blend well, so I'd like to get them blended.

Let's talk about your music. Your first cover was Lana Del Ray's Video Games...

I just remember falling in love with it. I remember it really captivating me at the time. When I did an interview for a magazine, they asked me if I had experience doing anything other than porn, as that's what I was doing at the time. I said I could sing and dance, and they said they'd love to hear me sing. I just clutched onto Video Games as a good one to start with.

Your new album, Midnight Palace, follows hot on the heel of the Puppets Lament album. What was the inspiration for this?

I wrote the whole thing in this weird meta phase. It sounds so stupid, but that's probably because it is. I wrote it because it was how I'd been feeling during the previous few years. I've been through some pretty horrible stuff. I wanted to get it out there but not in too negative a way. So I decided to write these uptempo tracks - to give it that Sia vibe, as she writes in Titanium about alcohol abuse. Also in Chandelier. They're both very upbeat songs. I wanted to achieve that feel with this album.

You've been touring with this album and have dates coming up. How have your fans taken to it?

They really connect with the slow stuff. I try to do one or two slow songs, just to show a more vulnerable side of myself. I'm finding they're really enjoying two songs in particular - Pain and Harlequin. I think it's because they're totally different but at the same time love songs. People seem to have connected with those two the most.

Is your tour coming anywhere near the Midlands?

In the UK we're doing London, Manchester and Edinburgh. We will also head into the Midlands

You're mostly known for your porn career. How did you get into the business?

Weirdly, I got in through Grindr. An agent found me and asked how I felt

about doing it. I politely told him to go fuck himself, as I really didn't want to do it. Three months and lots of nagging later, I went to my mum and told her there was a man hustling me to do hard core, and did she think I should do it. She said, 'You're only young once, and this body is only going to last you so many more years, so you may as well get it over with'. I went to the audition and liked the industry right there and then.

How old were you at the time?

I'd just turned 21.

What's been the funniest on-the-job moment during your porn career?

Having two people film in front of me as I'm directing them. One of them is humming along to an Ariana Grande song while keeping still for the photos and pulling a sex face!

When do you see yourself retiring from porn?

This year or next. The porn industry is always changing and developing. I started it at the right time. The way we were seeing body image and the way we were seeing men was starting to change, and new models like myself were introduced on the back of that change. There are always new guys coming in, so those who've been in it a long time step away. I have my music, so I'm very happy doing that.

You've written two books. Did you always want to be an author?

I got into it because as a child I went through horrible experiences such as sexual assault, and a few other things not to mention. But I thought and hoped people would be inspired by the books. They will give people love and appreciation for themselves. I'm working on the last one now - hopefully it will be out in July.

With the Pride season upon us, are you going to any festivals?

Definitely Manchester Pride, and I'd love to go to Cardiff Pride, too. That's the one I'd really like to hit.

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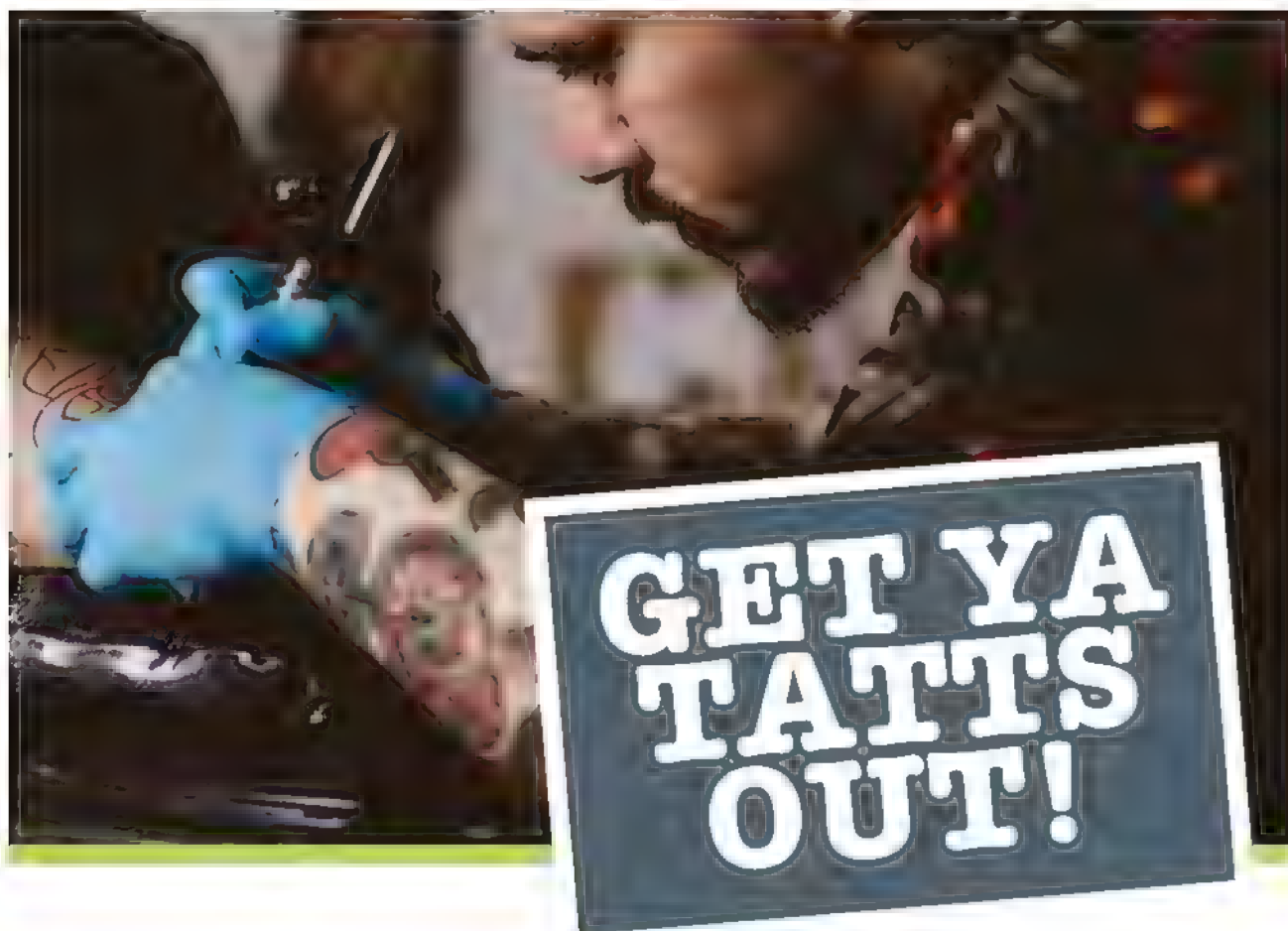
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 sexualhealth@blgbt.org
 0121 643 0821

 umbrellahealth.co.uk
 0121 237 5700
 umbrellaatbirminghamlgbt



Birmingham is the UK's TATTOO capital!

Tattoos. Some people love them, others hate them. But did you know that the Midlands is home to the tattoo capital of the UK? Yes, that's right - Birmingham has been crowned as the tattoo capital of the UK with nearly half of all adults having gone under the needle!

The survey was conducted by insurance brokers Carole Nash and the results showed that getting inked has massively risen in popularity with a total of 48 per cent of people saying they'd been

tattooed, with most respondents claiming to have between 11 and 15 different designs.

It's no wonder really when some of our favourite idols show off their awesome ink, often leaving us in awe. People like David Beckham or Justin Bieber are always getting inked with elaborate designs that make us feel the need to get our first or next tattoo, meaning Brummies spend £198 on average on each piece of work.

So who else ranked up there with Birmingham in the tattoo charts? Well the second city is home to the

highest number of people with a tattoo, followed by Norwich in second and Glasgow following up closely in third.

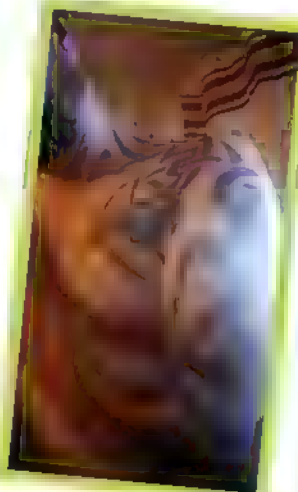
So which designs are the most popular here in the Midlands - and where are they? Well it's been revealed that Birmingham has a liking for horror themed tattoos, followed by Celtic lettering in second place. However, across the nation, the most popular designs featured flowers with lettering, song lyrics or popular phrases. And you'll more often than not find them on an arm, shoulder or back.

Reader's Tattoos...

This month we asked you - our Midlands Zone readers to show us your inkings and tell us about the stories behind them. Check out some of our favourites below...

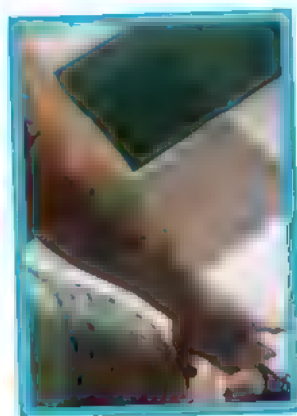
Paul Goodwin

I wanted a tribal tattoo as it's something I can evolve and change. It's been black and red for around eight years now, but I'm considering more red and more shading.



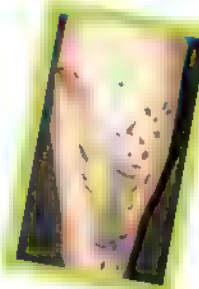
Gaz Barton, Birmingham

I don't think it's classed as a 'cool tattoo', but I have a Pokemon sleeve on my left arm that I truly love. The world's quite serious sometimes, so it's nice to have something to remind me to take things half hearted at times.



Shane Shakespeare, Walsall

It's a rainbow feather with flying birds. I absolutely fell in love with this design because it's meaningful as I had it done after I came out as gay. The birds symbolise me breaking into my new life and the rainbow feather is a symbol for the LGBT community.



So are you ready for your next (or first tattoo)? Here are five great tattoo studios in the tattoo capital of the UK (yes, it's Birmingham!)

1 VIVID INK vividinktattoos.co.uk

Vivid Ink has a string of tattoo studios across the Midlands, with branches in Birmingham, Sutton, Walsall, Stafford and Moseley. The chain has been established since 2011 and has forty artists and many thousands of happy customers.



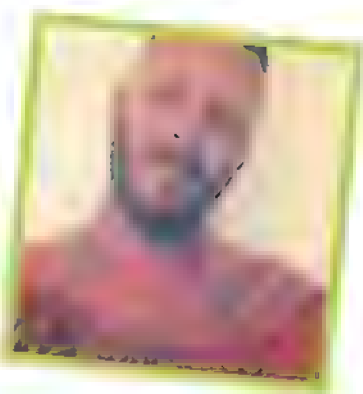
2 PARK STREET TATTOO parkstreettattoo.co.uk

Park Street Tattoo offer your typical machine tattoos but also specialise in a more traditional hand poke technique, offering you truly unique tattoos. It may be one of Birmingham's smallest tattoo studios, but they know their stuff so are increasingly popular.



Andy Williams, Birmingham

All my tattoos have meanings, some are sentimental such as the signature in the scroll - it is my grandfather's who I lost the year I was born. The three roses around my neck are for my grandmother, mother and sister. The 'Beauty Within' tattoo goes without saying. It's not about the outer beauty, it's the heart and the beauty of a person inside.



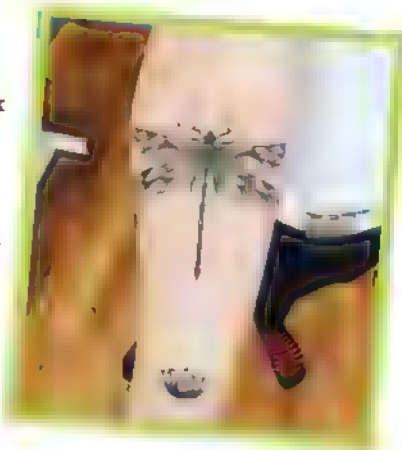
The vine leaves in the background refer to my name and my love of nature. It's nothing profound, it follows around my torso also



Here is my wonderful Sphynx tattoo completed to represent my four babies. It took forty hours to complete and was done by the wonderful Charley at Vivid Ink, right here in the Midlands.

Kyle Lansdell, Birmingham

I've always loved insects, I think they're absolutely fascinating! The moth represents the dark or 'night' with the moon on my wrist and the dragonfly represents the light or 'daylight' with the lotus flower on my wrist. Both have been done with a rational dot-work to bring out their intricacy. They're my symmetry or my good and my bad, my light and my dark, my yin and my yang.



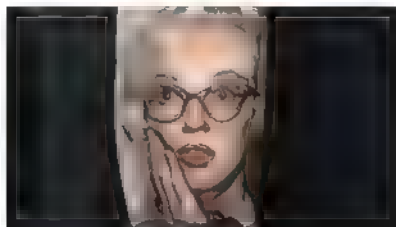
BODY GARDEN TATTOO bodygardentattoo.co.uk

Cesar De Cesaro has been tattooing since 1998 and is the man behind the highly popular Body Garden Tattoo studio. He has a number of artistic preferences including the ever popular Mandala designs, alongside dotwork, floral and traditional tattoos with many being bold and solid.



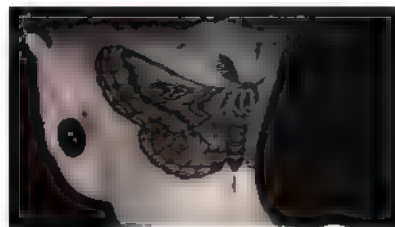
MODERN BODY ART modernbodyart.co.uk

Having been around since 1999, this studio is owned and operated by Matt Hunt and Jo Harrison. The studio often has guest international artists visiting Modern Body Art, whilst the gang also visit tattoo conventions across the UK and abroad. It's quite possibly one of the most diverse tattooists in the city.



HOUSE OF THIEVES custardfactory.co.uk

House of Thieves is located in Birmingham's Custard Factory and is unique in the sense that it offers cruelty free tattoos offering both black and colour vegan tattoos. The eccentric studio is operated by Robert and Holly Ashby who both studied Fine Art at the University of Birmingham. You can't get much more local than that.





Birmingham LGBT



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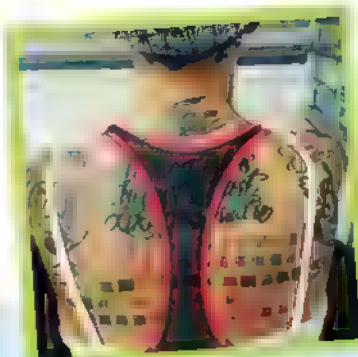
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Celebs with impressive ink...



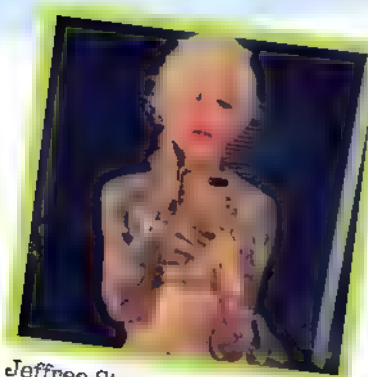
Adam Lambert



OITNB's Ruby Rose



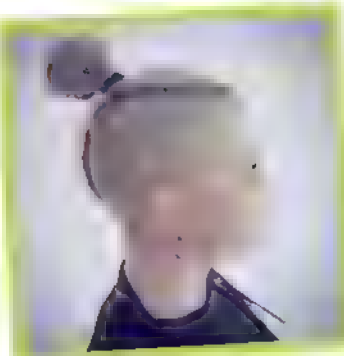
Justin Bieber



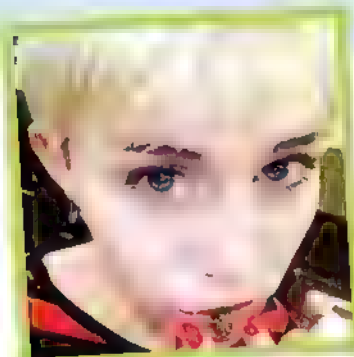
Jeffree Star



Cara Delevingne



Kelly Osborne



Miley Cyrus



Lady Gaga



Maroon 5's Adam Levine



18 THINGS you should know before getting a TATTOO...

1 Unless you want a tattoo that someone else may have already then don't look on google or Pinterest for an idea.

2 Use the internet for inspiration. Instagram is a good place for help finding your ideal artists. Instagram is used by tattooists as a way to showcase their portfolio. The artists will offer ideas if you are unsure of exactly what you want.

3 Research is key. Know what you want, or at least have a good idea before you book your first appointment.

It will be inked on you forever. It makes the artists job a lot easier if you bring pictures and have a clear idea of what you're looking for.

4 You may get an allergic reaction from a tattoo. Sometimes the pigments

of tattoo ink are also found in certain makeup formulas. If you've had a reaction then get some tests beforehand so you know what kinds of ink you should avoid.

5 A good tattoo isn't cheap. It's worth spending more on a good tattoo. The price of a tattoo depends on the size, the area of the body you want covered and the artist.

6 Before your tattoo session - Get a good nights sleep, eat plenty and don't go in drunk or hungover. You'll need energy to tolerate the pain of a tattoo, and you should stay away from alcohol because it'll thin your blood and make you bleed more during the process. Staying hydrated is important. Snacks are a great idea if you're going to be waiting a while.

7 Avoid any body of water for two weeks after your tattoo is completely finished, and also to stay out of the sun. It takes about two weeks for the tattoo to heal completely, so during that time, stick to just showers, and steer clear of your bath tub, any hot tubs, pools, lakes — you get the idea — to prevent infection. Then, after your tattoo is totally healed, you'll need to slather that sucker with sunscreen forever to prevent the colours from breaking down and fading.

8 While the tattoo is healing, it'll scab like a cut and feel sensitive like a sunburn. Right when it's finished, the tattoo will look perfect. After a couple of days, it'll start to dry out a little bit and might peel like a sunburn. It's important not to pick at scabs that form or it won't heal correctly. After two weeks, it should be all healed if you've kept it clean properly and moisturised.

9 Think about your tattoo for at least a year before you commit. Think of the

word 'timeless' because your tattoo will be exactly that. What you thought looked cool at the time may change over time so think hard about the design and think about whether you'll still be into it months later. Tastes change over time but this will last forever.

10 You have to be 18 to get a tattoo. It's illegal for anyone to have a tattoo under this age even with parental consent. Good idea to bring your ID with you.

11 Check out the artist you're considering on social media. This will help you decide if you like their style and want them to do your tattoo.

12 Make sure the parlour is spotless. It should smell and look as clean as a hospital. This isn't like getting your hair coloured. The toast is literally creating an open wound that can easily get infected.

13 The design on paper will look exactly the same on your skin. Make sure you're observant with the final version and the check spelling as it's not common to have a misspelled tattoo, but it does happen.

14 Leave if the artists makes you feel uncomfortable. The artist may make you feeling very unsure if they start to adjust the design or shame your idea. This is YOUR tattoo and the

artist should respect this. Getting your first tattoo is scary and they shouldn't be adding to your nerves or making you feel bad.

15 Tattoo take time. Don't think that you'll be in and out in a flash. This always depends on the size and complexity of it. Also if they are busy you may also have to wait a while. Bigger tattoos usually take multiple days to complete. There are only so many hours of being inked that you will want to bear!

16 If you have a medical condition talk to your doctor about it. You may need a doctor's note at the shop.

17 Some well known artists have waiting lists. To be inked by your preferred artists may live you waiting as long as year. If you have your heart set on that artists only, then wait. It will be worth it. But there will be plenty of other artists just as talented who are more low-key. You'll also save some money this way too.

18 If you want a tat on your feet, butt or ribs then this will hurt the most. A good idea to take some painkillers after - not before - to take the edge off. Taking them before may cause a negative affect on your tattooing session. Painkillers may heighten the chance of even more bleeding.



Prejudice and Pride

Many of our places were home to, and shaped by, people who challenged conventional ideas of gender and sexuality. Fifty years after the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality, we're exploring our LGBTQ heritage with a programme called Prejudice and Pride. We're holding events, special exhibitions and much more.

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Explore our LGBTQ+ stories

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/exploring-lgbtq-history-at-national-trust-places



SUMMER OF PRIDE

Your guide to this summer's LGBT Pride festivals - across the Midlands and beyond...

JUNE



Gloucestershire Pride heads 'Somewhere Under The Rainbow'

Saturday 10 June - Gloucester Park

glospride.org.uk

Theme: Somewhere Under The Rainbow

This year's Gloucestershire Pride, hailed by organisers as 'the biggest and best yet', kicks off with its annual Pride parade from the Shire Hall in Gloucester at 11am. The colourful procession will make its way to Gloucester Park, where the fun continues with a free day of music and entertainment. There are more than 50 acts spread across two stages - the main stage and cabaret stage - with performers including Tina Cousins, Suzanna Dee, Freddy Parker, Kyle Passmore and Kian Taylor-Jackson. A bar, food, stalls and a funfair also feature.

Pride in the Potteries



Saturday 24 June - Hanley Park

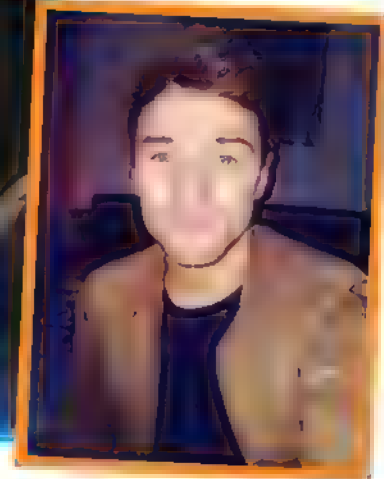
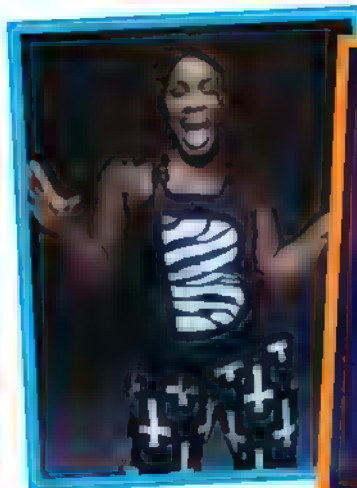
stokeontrentpride.org.uk

They're going potty for Pride in the Potteries this year, with Stoke-On-Trent Pride moving to the new location of Hanley Park. The event features the ProudToBe stage, hosting a fantastic line-up of entertainment throughout the course of the festival. As well as a day's worth of music, the event also features a great selection of community stalls, bars and food. Save us some Staffordshire oatcakes!

Misha B & Lloyd Daniels headline Coventry Pride!

Saturday 10 & Sunday 11 June - University Square
coventrypride.org.uk

Coventry Pride is a rapidly expanding LGBT festival which is this year taking place over two days at a number of city centre locations. The main event is being held at University Square, where you'll find three stages of music - headliners are Misha B and Lloyd Daniels - food, drink and numerous community stalls. The Fargo Fringe - an LGBT art show with entertainment - takes place over at Fargo Village, while there's a family-friendly fun-fair to enjoy outside Coventry Transport Museum.



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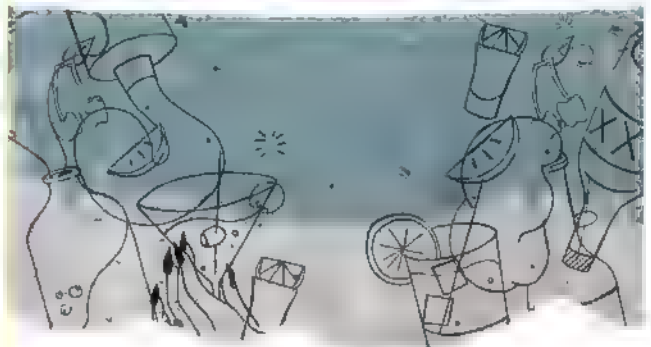
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JULY

Love Happens at
Pride in London**Saturday 8 July - Trafalgar Square**prideinlondon.org**Theme:** Love Happens Here

Last year's Pride In London saw over 40,000 people join the parade as it made its way through the city streets, while tens of thousands more took part in the Trafalgar Square celebrations. This year will be no different, with the event's biggest-ever parade featuring 300-plus groups. Then it's on to Trafalgar Square, where partying punters are treated to a full day of music, as well as contributions from inspirational speakers. And, of course, the party continues into the wee small hours of the morning at a whole host of gay bars and clubs.



The Pride of Chesterfield

Saturday 23 July - Quesen's Parkfacebook.com/chesterfieldpride

Returning for its third year, Chesterfield Pride is one of the region's fastest growing LGBT festivals, attracting thousands of people throughout the course of the day. Featuring a host of yet-to-be-announced live acts on the main stage, the event ensures that punters are partying with plenty of pride. Stalls, food & drink outlets and a funfair add to a frenetic day of fabulous family fun.

Live, laugh and
love with the
ladies at L Fest**Friday 21 - Monday 24 July - Prestwold Hall, Loughborough**
lfest.co.uk

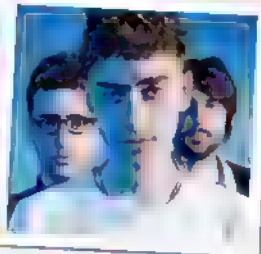
The UK's only lesbian festival moves to a brand new venue this year - the luxurious Prestwold Hall in Loughborough. Spread across four days and featuring a whole host of music, arts and entertainment, the 2017 edition of the event stars former Kosheen vocalist Sian Evans. Other entertainment on offer includes dance, cabaret, DJs, comedy, arts, literature and film. A great weekend for friends and families, L Fest caters for 'solos' too - you'll make more friends than ever before! Tickets are on sale now and start at £60 per day or £120 for the weekend.

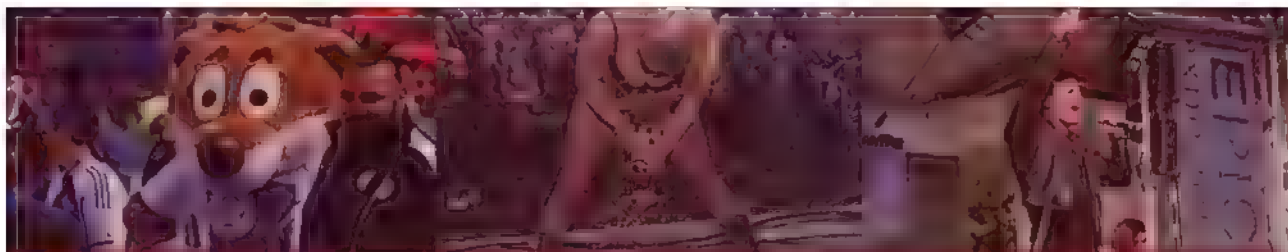


AUGUST

It's the Summer of
Love in Brighton!**Friday 4 - Sunday 6 August - Preston Park**brightonpride.org**Theme:** Summer of Love

The UK's biggest Pride festival returns, spread across three days and taking place by the sea! The main event is kicked off by a vibrant and colourful parade along the sea front, after which there's a day's worth of entertainment to enjoy at Preston Park. Headlining the main stage are the iconic Pet Shop Boys and pop group Years & Years. They're joined by Becky Hill, M.O, Fickle Friends and KStewart. There's also a huge dance arena, featuring top DJs, and a camp cabaret tent to satisfy all your drag queen needs! Tickets are now on sale, starting at £25, from brightonpride.org





LEICESTER

PRIDE

2017

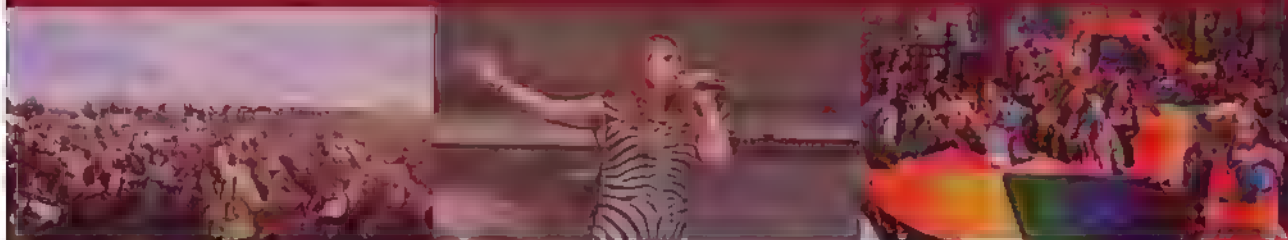
SATURDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER

VICTORIA PARK, LEICESTER
12 NOON - 8PM

**FULL LINE UP TO BE
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www.leicesterpride.com

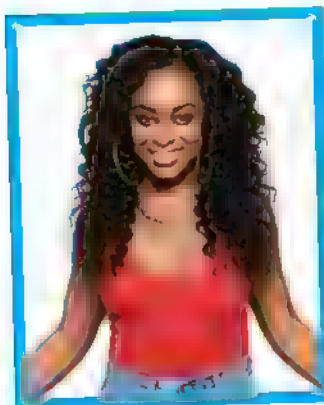
[@leicesterpride](https://twitter.com/leicesterpride)





AUGUST

Warwickshire Pride to celebrate Love & Freedom



Saturday 19 August - Pump Room Gardens, Leamington Spa
warwickshirepride.co.uk

Theme: Love & Freedom

Taking place in the scenic grounds of the Pump Room Gardens, Warwickshire Pride is back for its fifth year, offering another free day of all things LGBT. The festival features its biggest and best music line-up to date. Nineties pop star Kavana headlines the main stage and is joined by X Factor star Ralley C, Valerio Lysander, Feryl and more. The Gardens' bandstand hosts a wide range of entertainment and activities too, and there are also dedicated areas for young people, the trans community and families

SEPTEMBER

Union J to rock Leicester Pride

Saturday 2 September - Victoria Park
leicesterpride.com

Despite initial concerns about its immediate future, Leicester Pride is set to go ahead after securing £10,000 of sponsorship from DeMontfort University. Kickstarting with a fantastic parade through the city streets, the festival action then continues at Victoria Park, where X Factor boyband Union J will be headlining the main stage. A dance arena, funfair and numerous community stalls add to the magic.



Clean Bandit to headline Manchester Pride

Friday 25 - Sunday 27 August
Canal Street

manchesterpride.com

Theme: Class of 2017

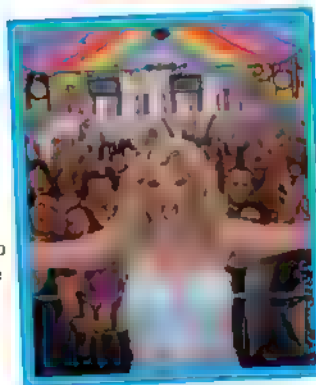


Another of the UK's biggest gay festivals, Manchester's bank holiday Pride event offers a big weekend of entertainment and partying based around the theme of 'Class of 2017'. Major names taking to the stage include Clean Bandit, Spice Girl Mel C, and X Factor stars Saara Aalto and Louisa Johnson. There are also DJ sets from Faithless, BBC Radio One's Danny Howard and Simian Mobile Disco. Tickets are now on sale, starting at £22.50, from manchesterpride.com

Rainbows in Walsall

Saturday 26 August - Gallery Square
facebook.com/walsallprideofficial

Another well established Midlands LGBT festival, Walsall Pride is this year taking place on the Saturday of the August bank holiday week end. No artists have been announced as yet, but the 2016 edition of the event saw the fantastic StooShe headlining a day of fabulous fun that also included camp cabaret at The Red Lion. Head to facebook.com/walsallprideofficial to keep up to date and receive the latest artist announcements.



Debut Pride festival for Worcestershire

Saturday 23 September - South Quay, Worcester
worcestershirepride.org

New for 2017, Worcester Pride is 'Worcestershire's first official Pride event, supporting the town's LGBT community and beyond'. And hoorah for that, say we! Taking place at South Quay, alongside the stunning River Severn, the festival is expected to feature live entertainment, markets, community stalls and a dance tent provided by local gay venue The Flag

SAT 26 & SUN 27 MAY 2018

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2018

THANK YOU

for supporting Birmingham Pride 2017

MORE INFO SOON ABOUT 2018: www.birminghampride.com



SUMMER OF PRIDE

UK Diary Dates

JUNE

Bristol Bear Fiesta and Southern HiBearnation

Saturday 3 June
Bristol Gay Village
bristolbears.co.uk

Oxford Pride

Saturday 3 June
Oxford Castle & Paradise
Street
oxfordpride.org.uk

Blackpool Pride

Saturday 10 June
Winter Gardens
blackpoolpridefest.co.uk

Gloucestershire Pride

Saturday 10 June
Gloucester Park
glospride.org.uk

Pride Canterbury

Saturday 10 June
Dane John Gardens
canterburypride.co.uk

Coventry Pride

Saturday 10 June
Fargo Village
coventrypride.org.uk

York Pride

Saturday 10 June
Knavesmire
yorkpride.org.uk

Essex Pride

Saturday 24 June
Central Park, Chelmsford
essexpride.org

Portsmouth Pride

Saturday 24 June
Strawberry Bank
seacoastoutright.org/portsmouthpride2017

JUNE CONT.

Saturday 20 June
Hanley Park
stokecontrentpride.org.uk

JULY

Pride in London

Saturday 8 July
Trafalgar Square
prideinlondon.org

UK Black Pride

Sunday 9 July
Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens
ukblackpride.org.uk

Bourne Free Pride

Saturday 1 July
The Triangle, Bournemouth
bournefree.co.uk

Sparkle: The National Transgender Celebration

Friday 7 - Sunday 9 July
Sackville Gardens, Manchester
sparkle.org.uk

Pride Bristol

Saturday 8 July
Castle Park
pridebristol.co.uk

Newcastle Pride

Friday 21 - Sunday 23 July
Town Moor
northern-pride.com

JULY CONT.

Friday 21 - Monday 24 July
Prestwood Hall Estate, Loughborough
lifest.co.uk

Pride in Hull

Saturday 22 July
Queens Gardens
prideinhull.co.uk

Brighton Trans Pride

Friday 21 - Sunday 23 July
Brunswick Square, Hove
transpridebrighton.tumblr.com

Chesterfield Pride

Sunday 23 July
Queens Park
facebook.com/Chesterfieldpride

Norwich Pride

Saturday 29 July
The Forum and Chapelfield
Gardens
norwichpride.org.uk

Swindon & Wiltshire Pride

Saturday 29 July
Town Gardens, Swindon
swindonwiltshirepride.co.uk

Liverpool Pride

Saturday 29 July
Liverpool Pier Head
liverpoolpride.co.uk

Sunday 30 July

Preston Park
brightonpride.org

AUGUST

Chester Pride

Saturday 19 August
Castle Square
chesterpride.co.uk

Brighton Pride

Friday 4 - Sunday 6 August
Preston Park
brightonpride.org

Leeds Pride

Saturday 5 - Sunday 6 August
Lower Briggate
leedspride.com

Bicon Convention

Thursday 10 -
Sunday 13 August
Leeds Beckett University
2017bicon.org.uk

Warwickshire Pride

Saturday 19 August
Pump Room Gardens
warwickshirepride.co.uk

Manchester Pride

Friday 25 - Sun 27 August
Manchester
manchesterpride.com

AUGUST CONT.

Saturday 26 August
Victoria Gardens, Truro
cornwallpride.org

Walsall Pride

Saturday 26 August
Gallery Square
facebook.com/walsallprideofficial

SEPTEMBER

Leicester Pride

Saturday 2 September
Victoria Park
leicesterpride.com

Worcester Pride

Saturday 9 September
Worcester Common
worcesterpride.org/pride-2017

Cumbria Pride

Saturday 16 September
Carlisle City Centre
cumbriapride.org

Midlands Zone wishes you a safe
and happy Summer of Pride!

What's On

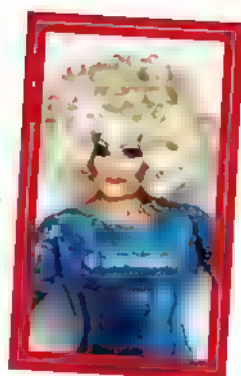
Sat 3 - Sun 11 June



Tina Sparkle at Shrewsbury's C:21 nightclub!

If you're looking for a great night out to start your week, why not pop down to C:21 nightclub in Shrewsbury to enjoy its weekly gay night, Fabulous Mondays. The month kickstarts with popular drag act Tina Sparkle taking to the stage.

**Monday 5 June -
C:21, Shrewsbury**



Drag Idol semi-final with Kerry Katona

Birmingham's got its own semi. That's the Drag Idol semi final we're talking about, with none other than Kerry Katona as the celebrity guest judge. The event is being hosted by La Voix and will see drag queens from across the country battling it out to make it to the popular talent contest's spectacular final!

Saturday 3 June - Eden, Birmingham

Kara Van Park ready to rock The Village Inn

Each and every Friday, Birmingham's Village Inn hosts great cabaret acts on its colourful stage - and this week it's the turn of the wild and witty Kara Van Park.

Don't forget there's also music from the fab DJ Lotty to enjoy, and great drinks offers to boot.

**Friday 9 June -
The Village Inn, Birmingham**



glittery fun with Danny Beard at Birmingham's Eden

There's some scouse fun to be had at Birmingham's Eden Bar this week, as glitter-loving, Britain's Got Talent star Danny Beard takes to the stage in the venue's marquee. If you've not seen this award-winning act before, make sure you get on down there!

**Thursday 8 June -
Eden Bar, Birmingham**



Cirque De Cabaret with the UK Please Boys

Saturday 3 June sees the launch of the raunchy and racey Cirque De Cabaret with none other than the hot and hunky UK Pleasure Boys! The weekly all male cabaret show features pyrotechnics, fire and illusions, stunning ariel acts Boylesque dance routines a comedy drag queen and a full monty show! It could quite possibly be the sexiest show to ever grace The Nightingale stage!

**Every Saturday from 8:30pm -
The Nightingale, Birmingham**

Fetish fun in Brum!

Got a fetish? Then you'll probably be gagging to get to Birmingham's biggest and best fetish night! Birmingham Fetish Men is back for its sixth installment and welcomes men of all shapes and sizes wearing things like rubber, leather, sportswear and neoprene. The dress code is strict - so you can't turn up in jeans and t-shirt - but as long as you adhere to it, we guarantee you'll have bundles of fetishy fun!

Saturday 10 June - Eden, Birmingham

June Entertainment

Fri
2nd

Fanny Burns

Drag Idol 2016
Finalist
Great Vocals & Comedy



eden



Sat 3rd

National Semi-Final with Celebrity Judge

Kerry Katona hosted by **La Voix**



Thurs
8th

Danny Beard

BGT Semi Finalist
Drag Idol UK Winner
Great Vocals & Comedy

Sat
10th

BFM-6

groups/Britishmen

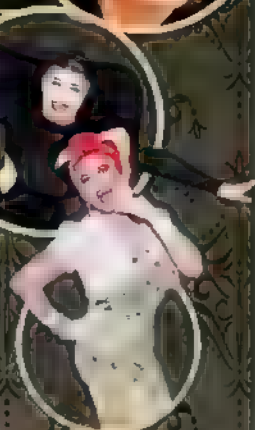
All Fetish Gear from
Leather to Rubber, Sports
to Skin is welcome.



Thurs
15th

La Voix

Britain's Got Talent
Semi-Finalist
Great Vocals & Comedy



Sat
17th

Panic on the Streets of Birmingham with LIVE BAND
The Smiths & Morrissey Disco
In the Marquee /smithsdisco@brum/



Thurs
22nd

Brenda LaBeau

Drag Idol
Finalist, Great Vocals
& Comedy



Fri
23rd

Ruby Murry

Britain's Got Talent
Contestant
Great Vocals & Comedy



Fri
23rd

MidsBears

Monthly Meet-Up
Bears, Cubs, Others, and
their admirers



Sat
24th

Mary Mac

The Cock O' The North
Drag Artists
Great Vocals & Comedy



Thurs
29th

Danny Beard

BGT Semi Finalist
Drag Idol UK Winner
Great Vocals & Comedy



Every Fri

DJ Nikki
Karaoke & Disco

Every Sat

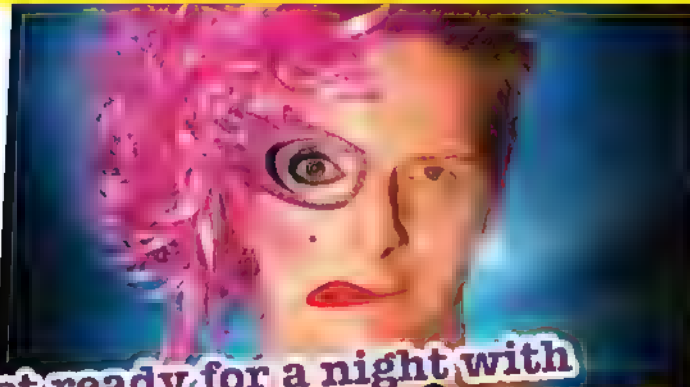
DJ Dan
Charts & 80's from 2am

Every Sun

DJ Nikki
Karaoke & Disco

What's On

Mon 12 - Sun 18 June



Get ready for a night with
DE Experience
She's back in Brum!

Jonathan Hellyer as his popular alter-ego, The DE Experience - a tribute to Dame Edna - will be performing his highly acclaimed stage show at the award winning Village Inn this month. The DE Experience went down a storm in the Cabaret Marquee at Birmingham Pride last month, so make sure you catch this show!

Friday 16 June - The Village Inn, Birmingham

The Smiths & Morrissey Disco



If you're fans of music from the likes of The Smiths and Morrissey, then there's a whole night dedicated to it this month! Let's party!

**Saturday 17 June
Eden, Birmingham**

Cocktail time at Sidewalk

Fancy joining us for a cocktail or several at Sidewalk? They're two-for-one from 12pm till 8pm every day - or all day on a Monday! Which one will you choose?

**Everyday at Sidewalk,
Birmingham**



La Voix returns



Britain's Got Talent's La Voix - who was last year voted Best National Cabaret Act in the Midlands Zone Readers' Awards - returns to Eden for another entertaining evening!

Thursday 15 June - Eden, Birmingham

Hitman and Her with Gavina!



Join DJ Mike Emery and your hostess Gavina every Friday at Missing for a night of fun and music. Plus, there are bottles of Prosecco for just £12.95 from 7pm!

Every Friday at Missing, Birmingham



JUNE

THE VILLAGE INN

FRIDAY 02 - MISS MARTY

FRIDAY 09 - KARA VAN PARK

FRIDAY 16 - THE D.E. EXPERIENCE

WITH SIMON LE VANS

FRIDAY 23 - TANYA HYDE

FRIDAY 30 - SANDRA

What's On

Mon 19 - Sun 25 June



Bow down for Brenda!

There's a great night of cabaret in store at Birmingham's Eden Bar this month, with the incredible Brenda LeBeau taking to the stage to entertain the masses.

Thursday 22 June - Eden, Birmingham



Get Pounded in The Nightingale!

Who doesn't love £1 drinks? We certainly do, and we're sure you do too - so head down to The Nightingale every Thursday for a great and pleasingly cheap night out!

Every Thursday - The Nightingale, Birmingham



Tanya Hyde in Birmingham!

Have some body with Tanya Hyde! She'll be down to The Village Inn for a night with the action, singing, and Tanya Hyde!

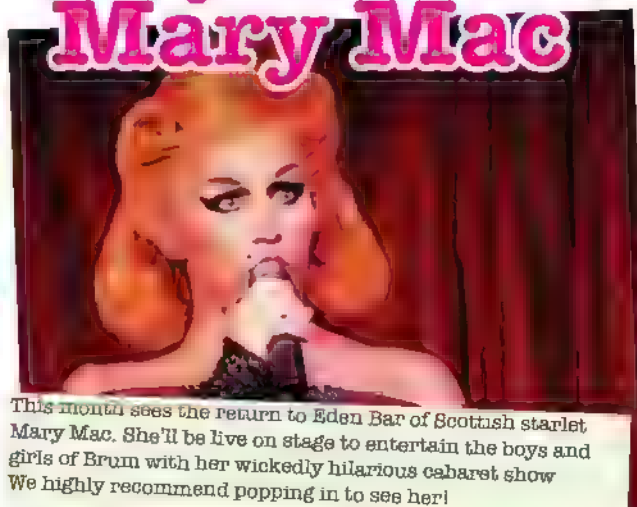
Friday 23 June - The Village Inn, Birmingham

Furry fun with MidsBears

If you're a bear or a friend of the bear community at large, then pop down to MidsBears at Eden every third Friday of the month. It's a great night out and attracts a fab crowd. Check it out - you'll love it!

Friday 23 June - Eden, Birmingham

Party time with Mary Mac



This month sees the return to Eden Bar of Scottish starlet Mary Mac. She'll be live on stage to entertain the boys and girls of Brum with her wickedly hilarious cabaret show. We highly recommend popping in to see her!

Saturday 24 June - Eden, Birmingham

**MARK AMES
PRESENTS**



**THE BEAR'S CLUB
BOLDER BEARS CLUB**

XXL BIRMINGHAM
30th JUNE

10PM - 4AM £8 ENTRY

THE CORE CLUB

135 SHERLOCK ST, BIRMINGHAM B5 6NB

XXL-LONDON.COM

What's On

Mon 26 June - Sun 2 July

£1.50 Bombs every Thursday at Sidewalk

If you're a fan of Jagerbombs, Skittlebombs or Buccabombs, then Sidewalk is the place to be every Thursday. You can get these, along with many more flavours, for just £1.50! Bombs away, kids, bombs away!

Every Thursday - Sidewalk, Birmingham

Sandra back in Brum!

And just like that, it's the end of the month! But what better way to finish things off than by heading for The Village Inn to join that 'whore of Hampstead Heath', Sandra London, for her regular last-Friday-of-the-month residency!



Danny Beard is back in town!

You can never have too much of Danny Beard! Following his Best National Cabaret Act victory in this year's Midlands Zone Readers Awards, the glorious Danny is returning to Birmingham at the end of the month for even more glittery fun!

Thursday 29 June - Eden Bar, Birmingham



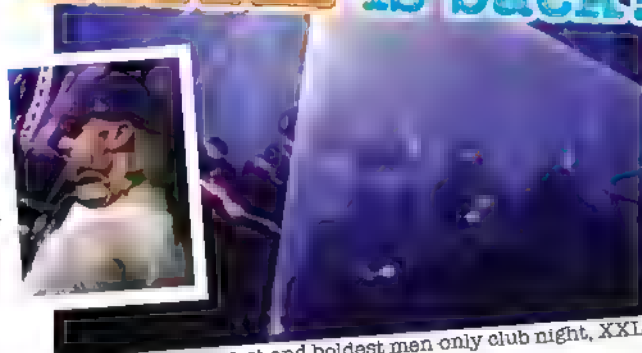
Grab a great roast at The Loft



Feeling a little bit rosey after Saturday night's shenanigans? Then look no further than The Loft for your hangover-cure Sunday lunch! With an impressive selection of meats available, you'll be hard pressed to find a better offer! Nothing beats a bit of meat and two veg on a chill out Sunday, does it?

Every Sunday - The Loft, Birmingham

XXL is back!



The Midlands' biggest and boldest men only club night, XXL, has got a new slot the last Friday of each month. With resident DJ and producer Paul Morrell providing the soundtrack to the night, the award winning event sees hundreds of men from bears to cubs and everything in between partying the night away

Friday 30 June - The Core Club, Birmingham

GORGEOUS

THURSDAY 1-6AM | FRIDAY & SATURDAY 11PM-6AM

2 BARS | VIP BOOTHS | VIP LOUNGE

KEEPING WOLVERHAMPTON OUT!

OFFICIALLY THE MIDLANDS BEST GAY NIGHTCLUB! (MIDLANDS ZONE AWARDS)

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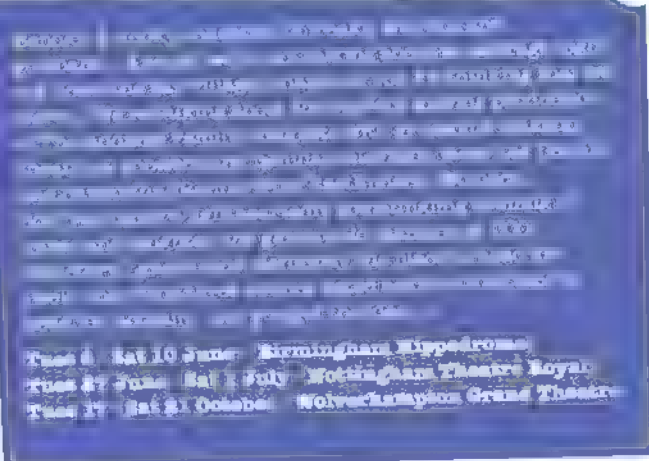
GORGEOUS, SCHOOL STREET, WOLVERHAMPTON, WV1 4LF. 01902 771122

What's On

Arts Theatre Entertainment



The Addams Family



Pavel Brázda Is Here

Offering irrefutable evidence that you're never too old to expose yourself to new people, this is 91-year-old Czech artist Pavel Brázda's first ever UK exhibition. "This series of works is structured into individual chapters, each with a beginning and end," says the man himself. "It all begins with birth and youth. Then it spans across a range of erotic themes to more dramatic and existential topics such as old age or death."

Thurs 1 June - Sat 1 July - Library of Birmingham

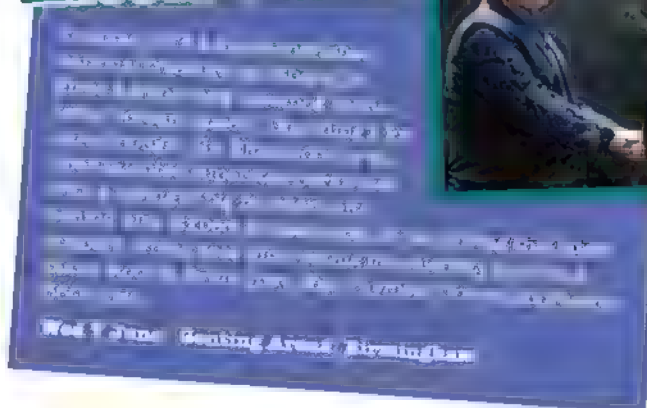
That naughty Oscar Wilde was causing controversy again with this one-act play, which was banned for 35 years in the UK. Already banged up in the slammer for being a bit too keen on willies, Wilde missed the show's premiere in Paris.

Telling the tale of Herod's daughter and her desire to see John the Baptist's head on a plate (personally we prefer egg and chips on our plate, but each to their own), the play is here presented by the RSC to mark the 50th anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality in England and Wales.

Salomé is played by a male actor, but in a clever acknowledgement of our splendidly gender-fluid times, the character is nonetheless referred to throughout the production as 'she'.

Fri 2 June - Wed 6 September
Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

Elton John





Summer in Southside

Just a hop, skip and a mince from Birmingham's hot'n'happening gay village, the city's Southside district is an area that's positively bursting with fun and frivolity this month, thanks to the return of this two-day festival.

The theme for 2017 is 'the great outdoors', so visitors shouldn't be surprised to see Farmer Giles in attendance, complete with five-bar gate and pearls of wisdom on all manner of subjects (hopefully he'll stop short of shoving his arm up anything, but best keep your wits about you just in case). Birmingham's original mega-folk favourites, The Destroyers, are on hand too, while other attractions include an interactive storytelling adventure and 'a quirky, colourful and energetic collision of dance and music'.

Sat 17 - Sun 18 June - Birmingham Hippodrome

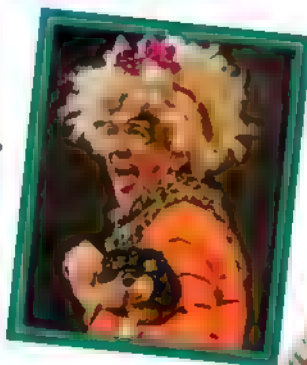
Wake Up & Deirdrealize

Lucy Harrington here stars as Deirdre Me, a comedy character she describes as 'more magnanimous than Gandhi, sexier than chocolate, hotter than the sun'.

"The show is an audacious combination of storytelling and game show, with a dark twist," explains Lucy. "It's the story of one woman's desperate search for meaning, in a world where dreams are sold as reality and the notion of 'fake it to make it' is pushed to the extreme."

Thurs 8 June

The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham



Ursula Martinez: Free Admission

Ursula Martinez has been described as a performance provocateur – and anybody attending this latest show will find it easy to see why. Baring all as she sets about gaining a better understanding of the absurdity of modern living, she shocks and surprises with plenty of politically incorrect chat. She also builds a wall between herself and her audience using breeze blocks and cement, as well as revealing that she's got a bit of a thing about anal hygiene. Glad to hear it, huh?

**Thurs 15 - Sat 17 June
The REP, Birmingham**



Funny Girl

This critically acclaimed new version of the hit musical stars Natasha J Barnes in the title role, with the oh so-hunky Darius Campbell lending manly support as her ne'er-do-well hubby. Written over 50 years ago, debuting on Broadway in 1963 and making a star of the ever-magnificent Barbra Streisand, Funny Girl tells the story of real life Broadway legend and comedian Fanny Brice. Iconic numbers include People and Don't Rain On My Parade.

Mon 12 - Sat 17 June - Nottingham Theatre Royal;

Mon 24 - Sat 29 July - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

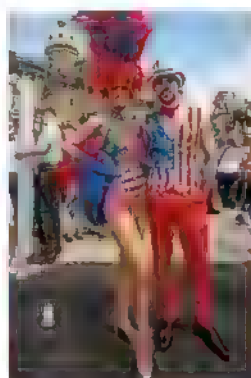
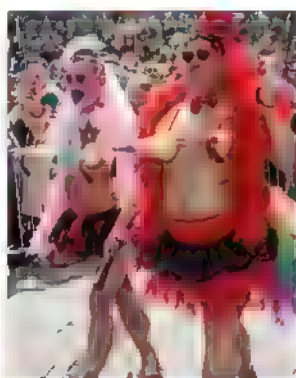
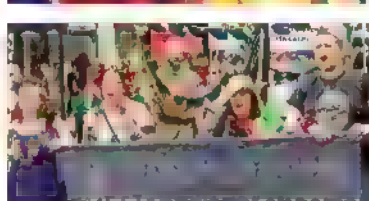
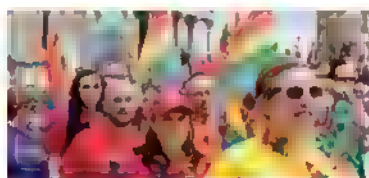
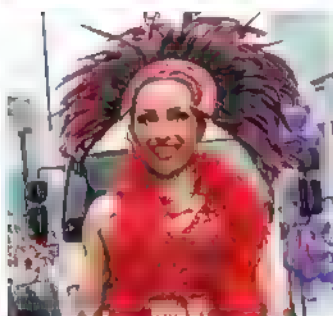
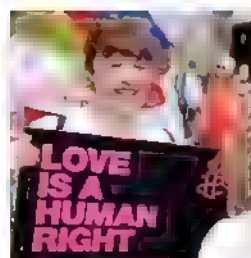
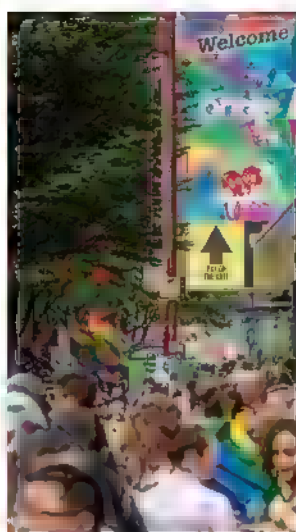
La Cage aux Folles

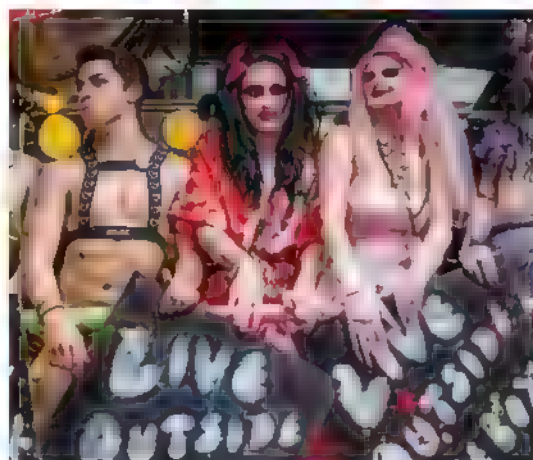
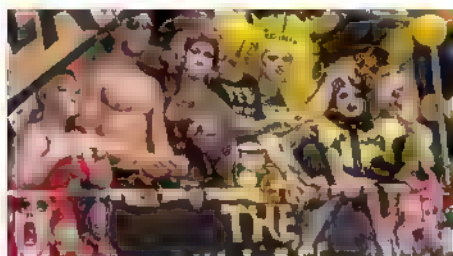
Set in a Saint-Tropez mansion, La Cage aux Folles tells the story of the venue's gay manager, Georges, his romantic partner Albin, and the problems that ensue when Georges's son brings home his fiancée's ultra-conservative parents.

John Partridge showcases his finest selection of songs and plenty of other talents besides in this most engaging of musicals. Matt Webb and Adrian Zmed also star.

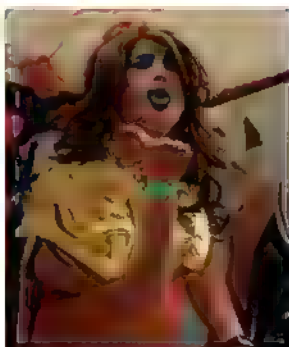
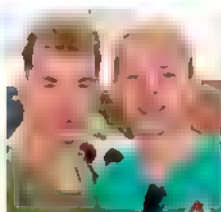
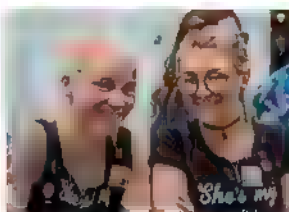
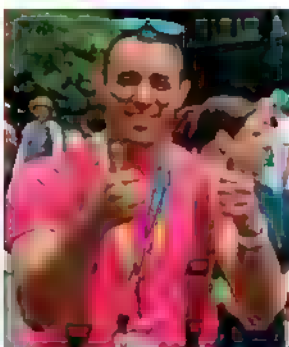
Tues 27 June - Sat 1 July - Wolverhampton Grand



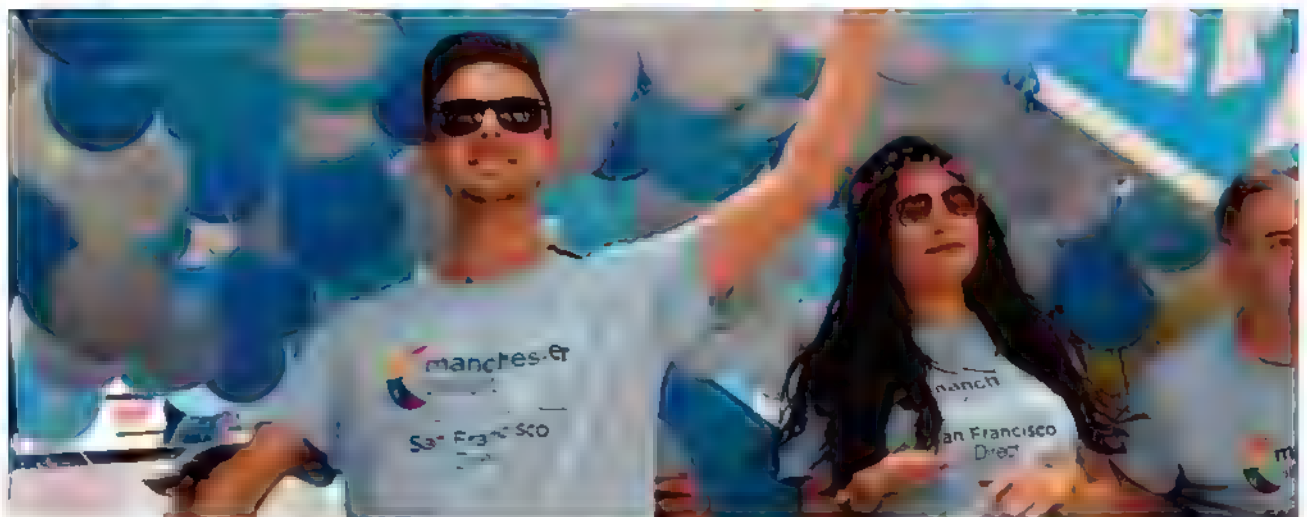




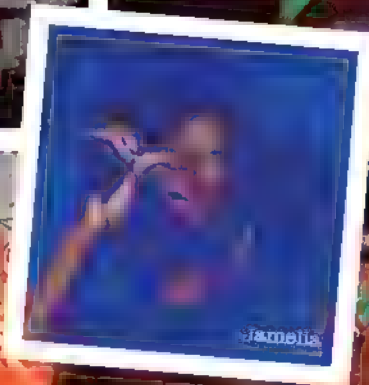
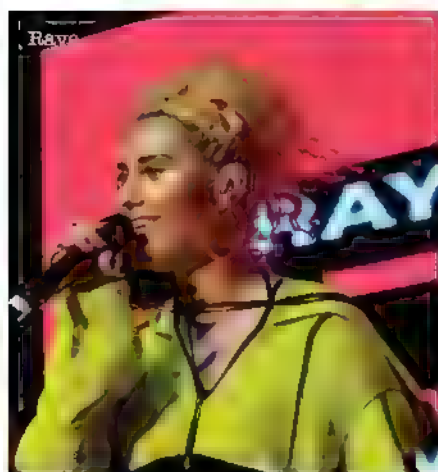
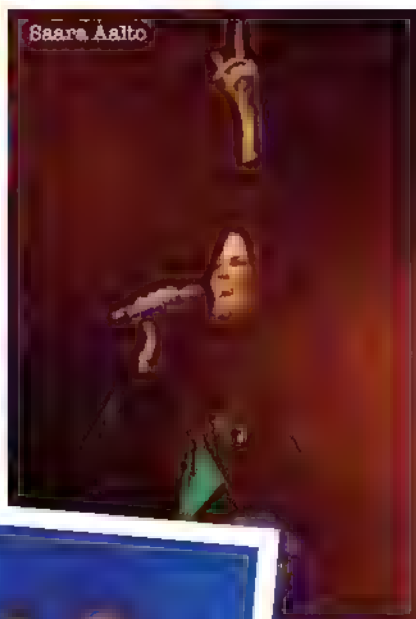
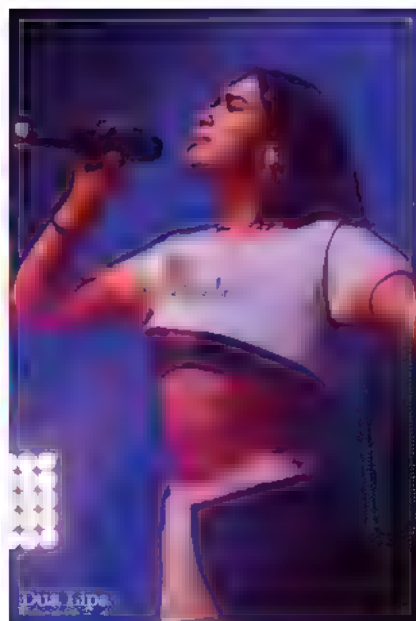
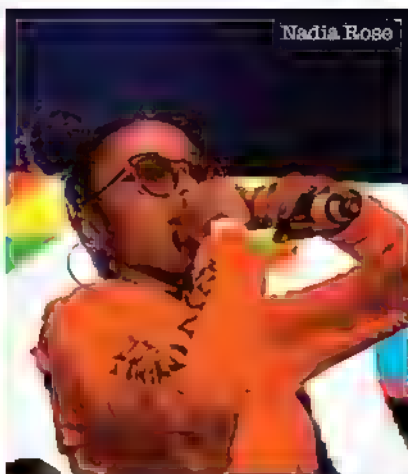


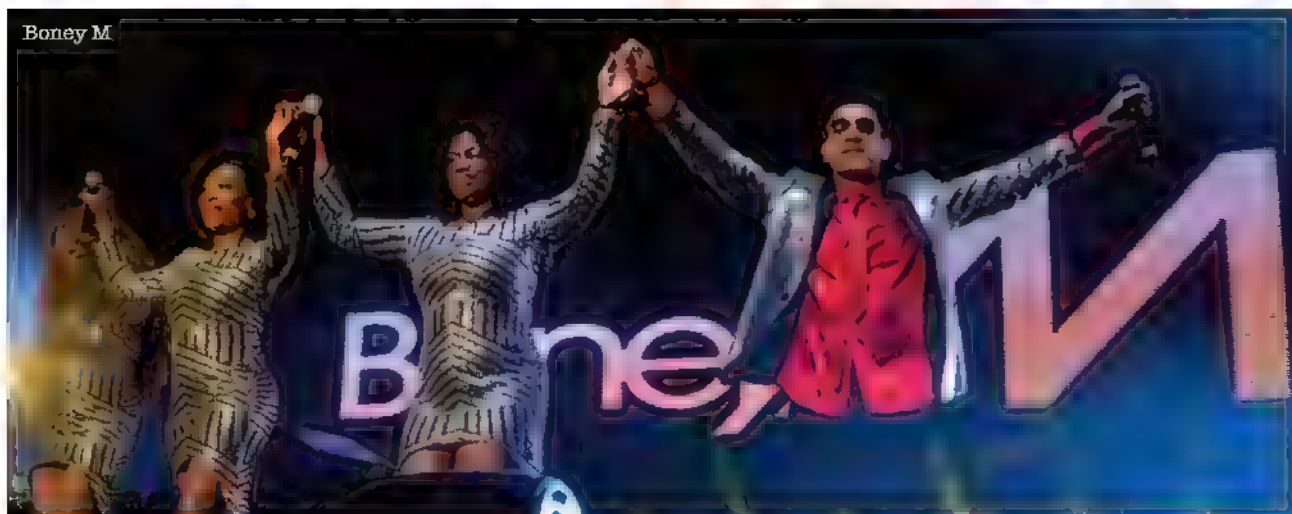
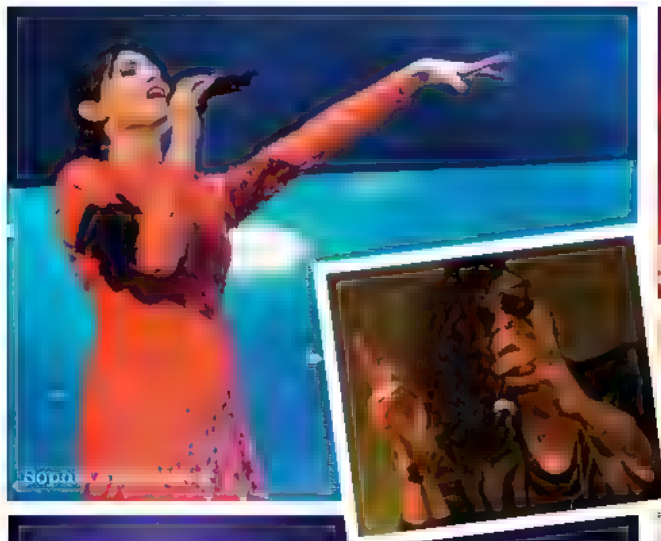
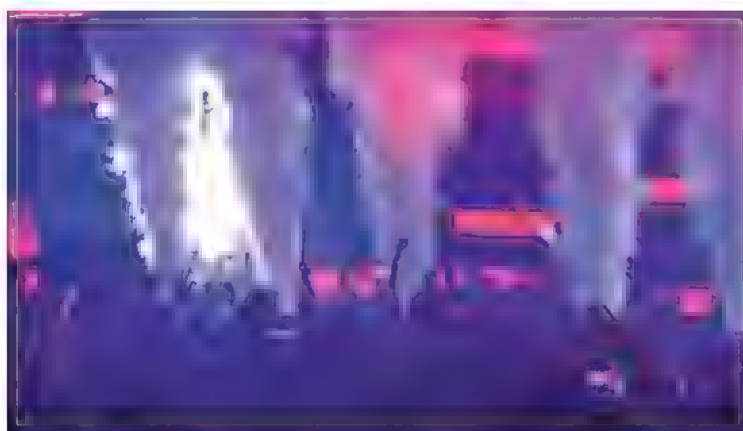




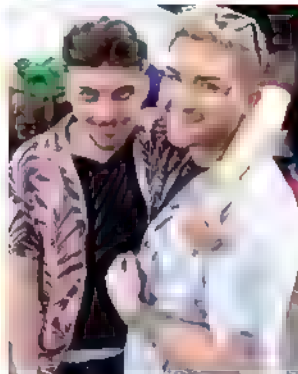
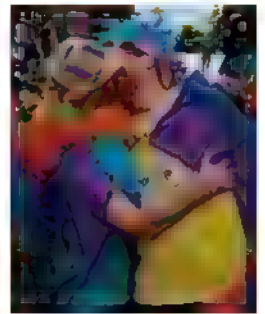
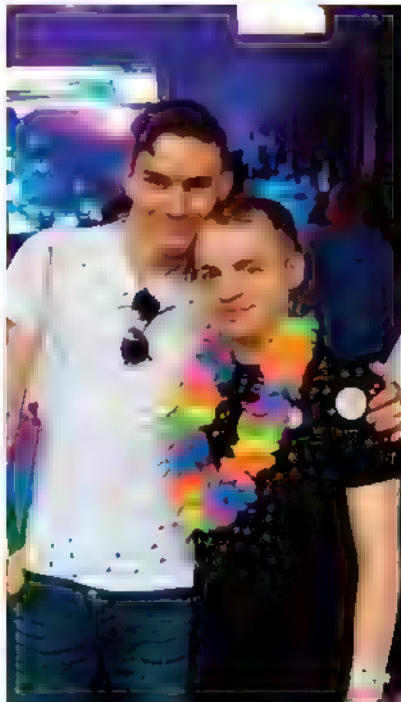
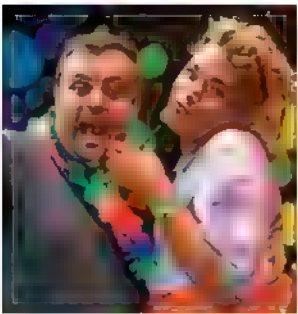
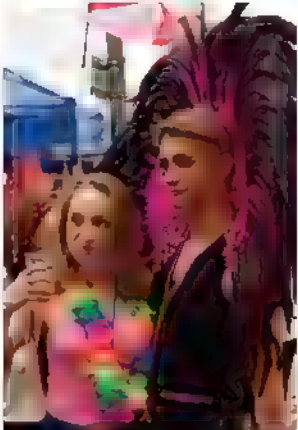


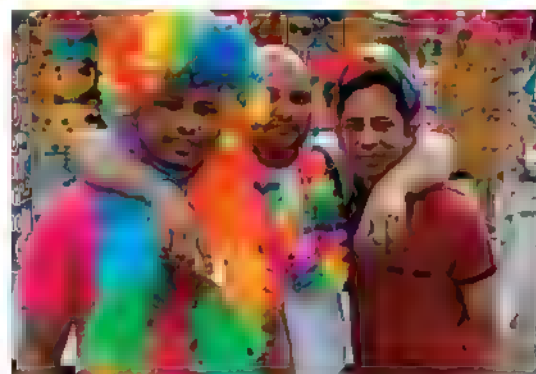
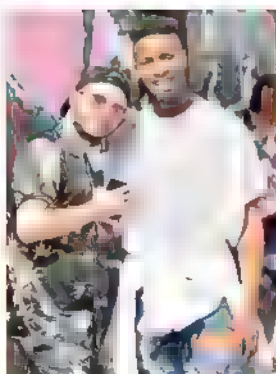
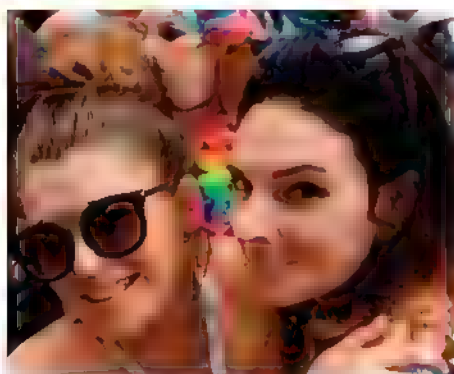
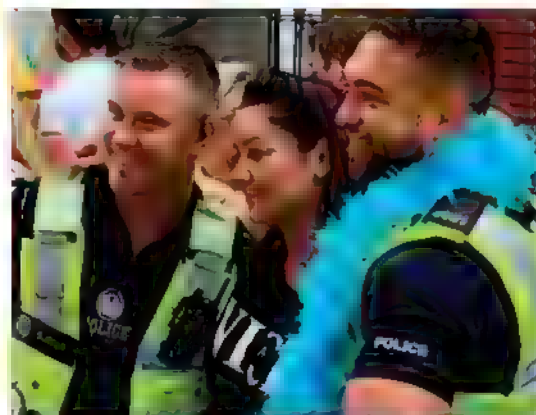
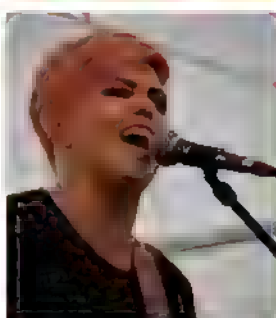
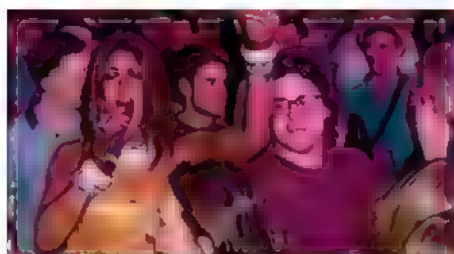
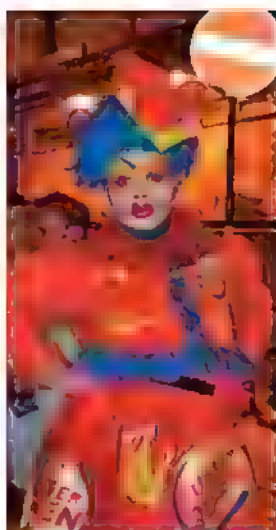
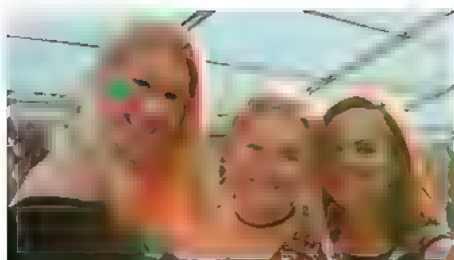
Pride Main Stage



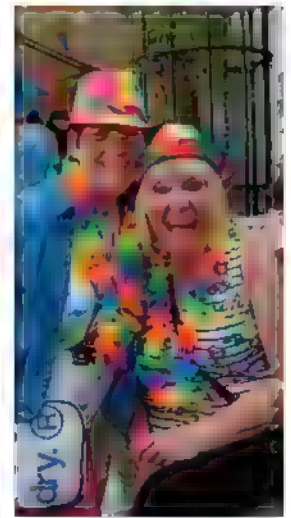
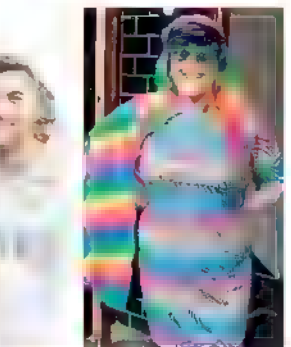
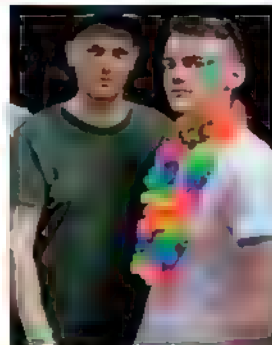
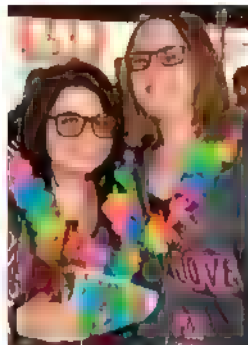
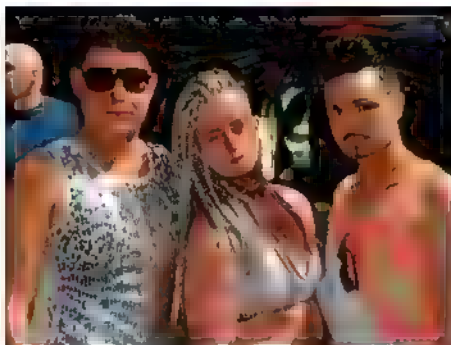


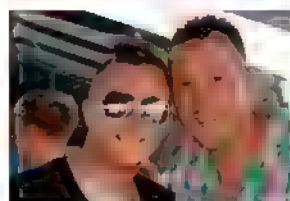
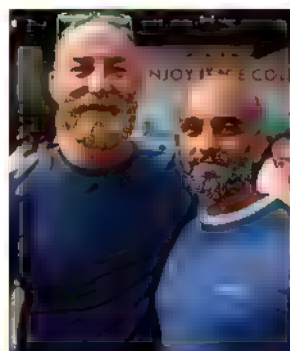
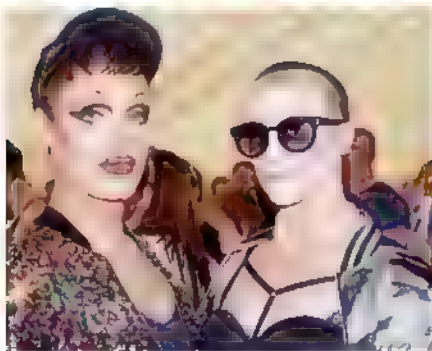
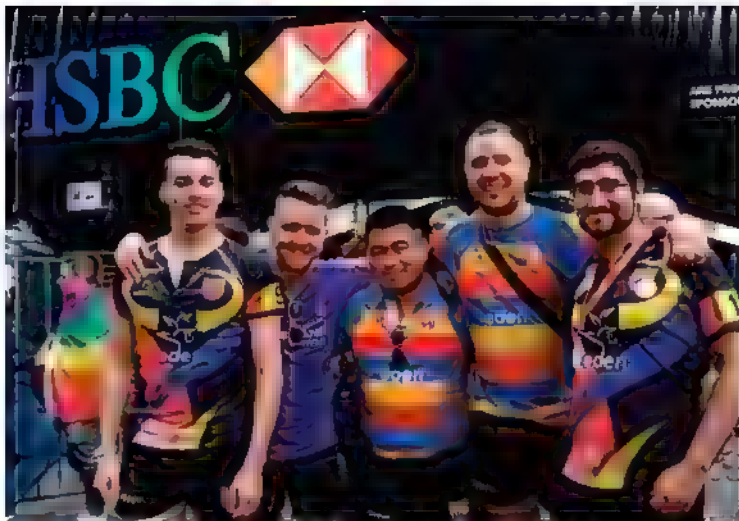
Around the Gay Village



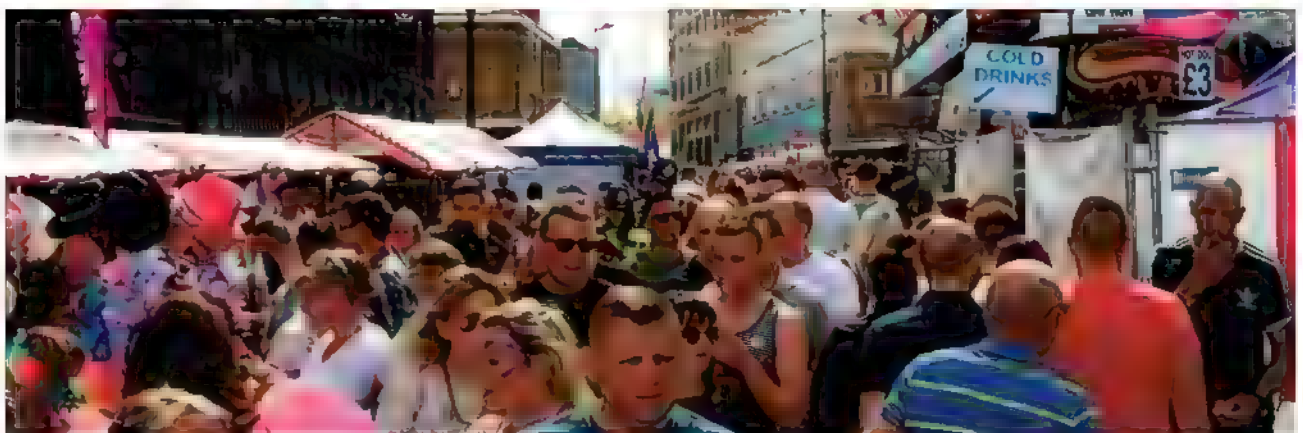
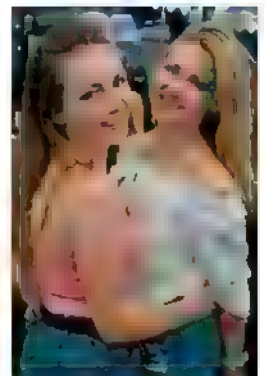
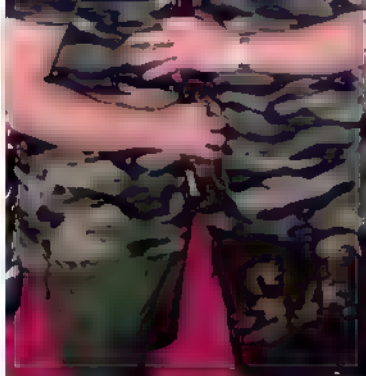
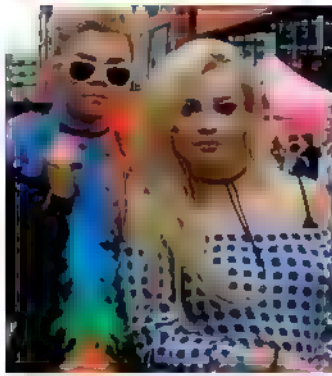
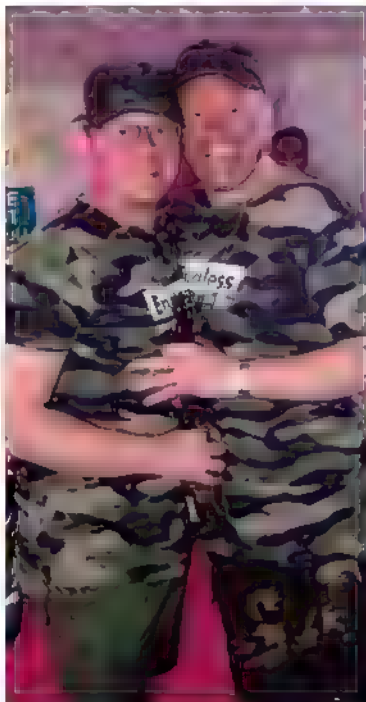
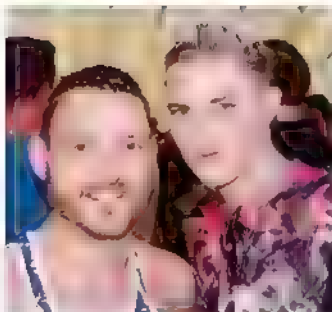
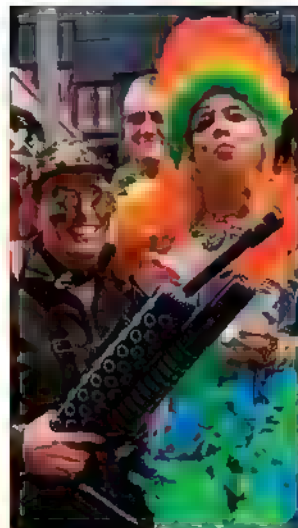
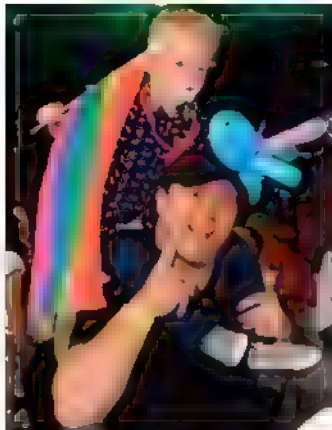


Around the Gay Village

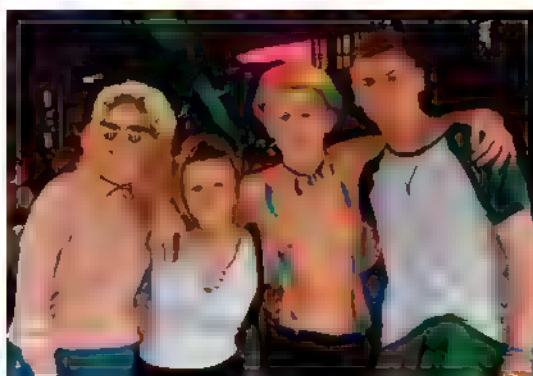
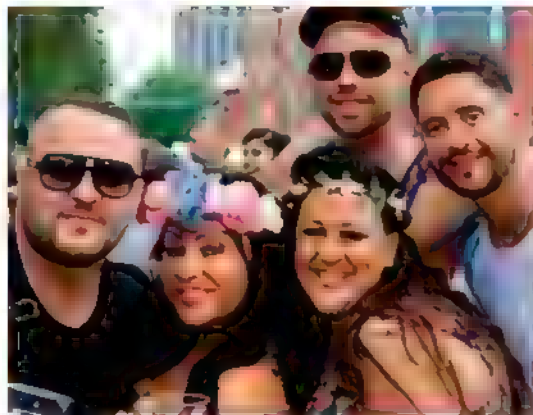
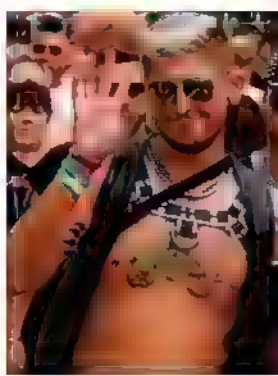
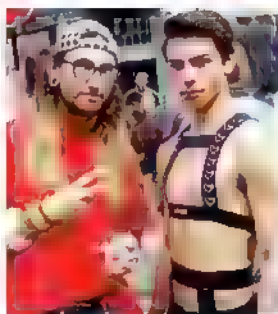
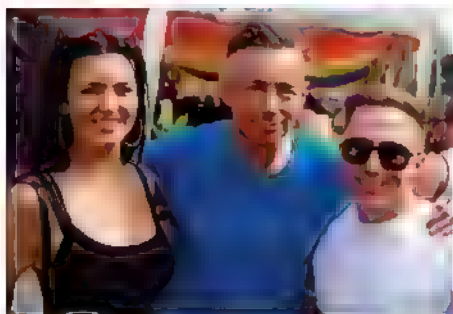




Around the Gay Village



Pictures by **Laura Byrne, Antony Collins, Clive Padden, James Furnival, Jason Dawson, Kal Ahmed, Jason Dawson & Rikki Miles**



Gaylife Stoke
Stoke-on-Trent

Stoke-on-Trent Pride

Saturday, 24 June

Hanley Park

See our team for...

STI testing

Free condoms

Sexual health advice

Freebies

...and more!

 **Gaylife Stoke**

 **@GaylifeStoke**

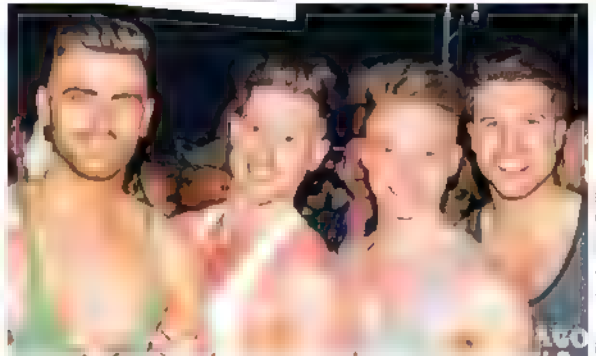
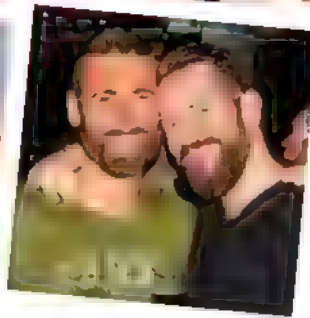
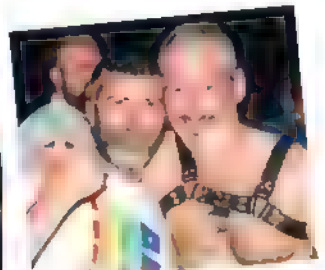
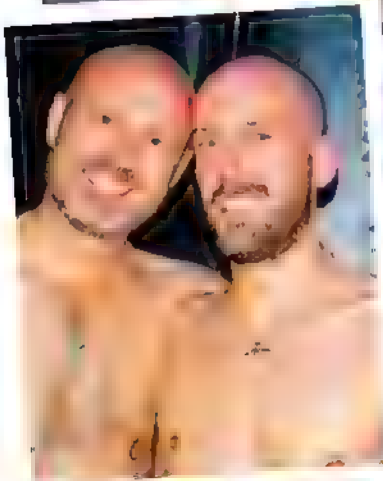
 **www.gbtstoke.co.uk**

Boys to men at Brum's XXL



Birmingham's men-only club night, XXL, attracted hundreds of guys to The Core Club on the eve of the city's Pride festival last month

The award winning club night takes place on the last Friday of every month, with resident DJ and producer Paul Morrell on the decks



Pictures by Antony Collins

WIN! A pair of tickets to **La Cage Aux Folles**

We fell in love with it when it played Birmingham, and now La Cage Aux Folles has headed up the road to delight the theatre-going public of Wolverhampton!

Set in a Saint-Tropez nightclub, La Cage tells the story of the venue's gay manager, Georges, his romantic partner, Albin, and the problems that ensue when Georges's son brings home his fiancée's ultra-conservative parents...

EastEnders actor John Partridge stars, with able support coming from West End favourite Marti Webb. The one-time co-star of '80s cop series T.J. Hooker - US actor Adrian Zmed - also features

La Cage runs at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 27 June to Saturday 1 July. Tickets are on sale now - and guess what? We've teamed up with our friends at the Grand to give away a pair to one of our ever-faithful readers.

All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning is answer the following question at midlandssone.co.uk

In which TV soap did John Partridge appear?

- A) Emmerdale
- B) Hollyoaks
- C) EastEnders

Competition closes on Fri 30 June



WIN! A pair of tickets to see **Miss Saigon** in Brum!



If you fancy a night out at the theatre, enjoying a great musical, we've got one hell of a competition for you to enter!

Yes, that's right, we're giving away a pair of tickets to see Miss Saigon at the Birmingham Hippodrome!

Simply visit midlandssone.co.uk and answer the following question:

Who has produced this latest version of Miss Saigon?

Choose one of the following:

- A) Andrew Lloyd Webber
- B) Cameron Mackintosh
- C) Cilla Black

Visit midlandssone.co.uk to enter.

Who has produced this latest version of Miss Saigon?

Choose one of the following:

- A) Andrew Lloyd Webber
- B) Cameron Mackintosh
- C) Cilla Black

WIN! A meal for four at **The Loft** in Brum!

Given that it's recently been the recipient of a mammoth refurbishment costing tens of thousands of pounds, there can be no better time to visit The Loft for a couple of drinks and a gobsmackingly good meal!

With an extensive menu on offer, ranging from pizzas and burgers to roast dinners, there's plenty to tempt and tantalise the tastebuds.

Couple that with a fantastically inventive cocktail menu and you're in food & drink heaven!

We've teamed up with the lads and lasses at The Loft to give you a chance to win a meal for four!

To enter this competition, all you need to do is visit midlandssone.co.uk and answer this simple question:

Where is The Loft located in Birmingham?

- A) Jewellery Quarter
- B) Gay Village
- C) China Town

Competition closes on Fri 30 June





Boost your sexual health IQ for Men's Health Week

The team at Gaylife Stoke are working to raise awareness of good sexual health practices for this month's Men's Health Week, which runs from 12 to 18 June.

Check out the team's five key need-to-know facts when it comes to sexual health...

1. Syphilis is on the rise nationally and locally

Cases of syphilis among men who have sex with men have increased significantly recently, not just in the Midlands but across the country too.

Syphilis can lead to serious health problems if left untreated, so it's worth getting a full sexual health check-up between each sexual partner.

2. You may be putting condoms on incorrectly

You'd be surprised how many people don't know how to put on a condom correctly. To do so, you should check the date and kite marks, tear along the serrated edge, squeeze the tip and roll down to the base. Missing any of these steps can increase the likelihood of the condom failing to do its job.

3. You can get STIs from oral sex

Many STIs can be passed through oral sex, including chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis. Even HIV can be passed on through oral sex. The risk of this is low, but it can happen. The best way to prevent getting an STI from oral sex is to use a condom.

4. It's not all about anal

Not all men who have sex with men have anal sex. 'Sex' is different for everyone and can range from a bit of hand play to oral to anal. If you don't like anal, don't feel like you need to do it just because it's what you believe you should be doing. In fact, the team at Gaylife have come up with a whole range of things you can do instead - visit thedicktionary.co.uk to find some alternative sexy stuff.

5. Sex doesn't have to be like in porn movies

Don't put pressure on yourself to act like a porn star. Porn is often an unrealistic representation of sex (the average porn penis is two to three inches bigger than the average non-porn penis!), so don't feel like you have to act out what you see online. Only do what you're comfortable with and take things at your own pace.

For more information on sexual health and LGBT services in Stoke-on-Trent, visit lgbtstoke.co.uk

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The New Nintendo 2DS XL

The new clamshell design system will be available in a stylish Black + Turquoise colour, as well as White + Orange, and will use the same size large screen found on New Nintendo 3DS XL systems. As the name of the new system implies, visuals will be displayed in 2D only unlike its big brother, the 3DS, which brings 3D gaming to the palm of your hand. The system is lighter but still packs the same power as New Nintendo 3DS XL, and has built in NFC support for amiibo cards and figures

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Hyperkin Smart Boy

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PlayStation VR

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Arctis 3 Gaming Headset

The new Arctis 3 gaming headset, designed for every where you game, offers remarkable sound, comfort and style on all gaming platforms. It features SteelSeries 7.1 surround sound that delivers immersive sound on PC, and stereo audio on Mac, PS4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, VR and mobile

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Nintendo Switch

In addition to providing single and multiplayer thrills at home, the Nintendo Switch system also enables gamers to play the same title wherever, whenever and with whoever they choose. The mobility of a handheld is now added to the power of a home gaming system to enable unprecedented new video game play styles.

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Food and drink news from across the Midlands...

Fishy goings-on... Seafood eatery to open branch in Birmingham

A new seafood eatery which has recently been launched in Cardiff has announced plans to open a branch in Birmingham.

Seafood Shack features a Victorian-style fish & chip bar and takeaway, a 150-capacity 'shanty tavern', a Champagne and oyster bar, a roof garden and a 200-seater restaurant. Its menu includes lobster, dressed crab, jumbo crab claws, prawn tails, langoustine, crayfish, scallops and deep-fried calamari. The opening date for the Birmingham branch is yet to be announced by Seafood Shack's owners.



Michelin-starred Birmingham restaurant Purnell's is next month celebrating its 10th birthday with a special anniversary menu - and you and a dining partner could be there to enjoy the occasion, courtesy of a golden ticket prize draw.

Purnell's chef and owner, Glynn Purnell, is promising to give 15 lucky winners and their guests 'the evening of a lifetime' on Friday 7 July, when the restaurant hosts an exclusive Champagne reception and 10-course menu.

To be in with a chance of winning one of only 15 golden tickets, all you have to do is send a stamped addressed envelope to: Mr Purnell's Golden Ticket Prize Draw, Purnell's Restaurant, 55 Cornwall Street, Birmingham, B3 2DH.

The closing date for entries is Thursday 15 June (at 5pm). The 15 winners will receive their golden tickets the week beginning Monday 19 June.

Birmingham's Bar Opus is offering its customers the chance to channel their 'inner child' this summer, courtesy of an uber-cool collection of candy inspired cocktails.

The popular venue will take patrons back to their childhoods with its brand new range of drinks, the Bar Opus booze technicians adding a very grown-up twist to kids' favourites such as sherbert lemons, pear drops and Parma violets.

For details of all 13 new seasonal cocktails, visit baropus.co.uk



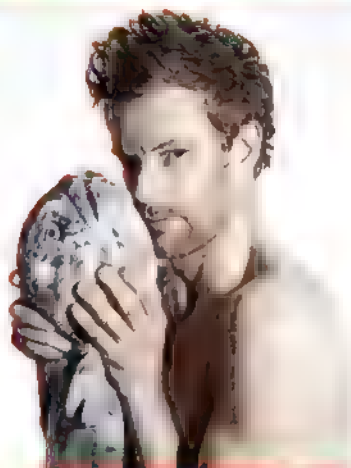
Food festival to make Wolverhampton debut

The first Wolverhampton Festival of Food & Drink takes place next month (Saturday 8 & Sunday 9 July).

The event is expected to feature 40 food & drink outlets, and cooking displays by street food traders and local chefs. The line-up of attractions also includes live bands, comedians, a Champagne/Prosecco bar with music, a family area with an open air cinema and traditional fairground games.

Enjoy a five-course dinner with Tom Aikens

Tom Aikens is returning to Birmingham to celebrate his 10th birthday with a special anniversary menu - and you and a dining partner could be there to enjoy the occasion, courtesy of a golden ticket prize draw.



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LIFE OF A THIRTYSOMETHING GAY

66 History Gone Queer

I thought I'd heard pretty much every homophobic slur there was. Fag, sausage-jockey, queer, shirt-lifter - most have come my way over the last 35 years, and most have simply slid off me like lube on an extra-large dildo.

Nowadays I barely hear anything. Perhaps I'm fortunate, or just too thick-skinned even to raise an eyebrow. Perhaps my defences are so strong I don't even know it. As Panti said at that amazing Ted Talk during Ireland's gay marriage debate, 'I'm just scanning the horizon and fed up of being afraid'.

But then, last week happened... It was one of those simple conversations that suddenly and unexpectedly falls into a black hole. The type that makes you want to shout and hit someone for their stupidity and outright insensitivity. I'm rarely floored, but this homophobe astounded me. "Gaaays," he said in his thick cockney accent, "well you lot 'ave only been around for the last twen'y years. Now everyfin's so fackin' PC!"

Well, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, you will be pleased to know that this sister sorted him 'propa' and 'well put him right, yeah', so to speak. My distinctive twin-set-and-pearls retort was enough to outwit and outman him even before he could put down his lager! He'd picked the wrong gay!

That said, his lack of apparent awareness of gay history didn't, in hindsight, surprise me, although his comments rankled for days. It got me thinking. Why should *he* know our history? Do we even know it ourselves? So much of LGBT+ culture is hidden, having been forced underground, expunged by puritanical censors or simply covered over, nowadays in places like Russia but stretching back as far as Ancient Greece. Those hunky Spartans of 300 fame (yes, I mean the movie) may have had a propensity for killing their babies if they showed any kind of weakness that might've prevented them from growing up to be fierce warriors, but

they would never have entertained the idea of killing a man simply because he slept with another man. In Ancient Greece, sexuality was not defined by gender but rather by who did what to whom. If you were top, you were considered a man, held higher social status and were respected for your apparent masculinity. If you were bottom, you were penetrated and therefore subservient, lower in social status and often considered a youth. Two men could love each other more freely, but one was regarded as inferior. Some would argue that this distinction is still, shamefully, in evidence on the modern-day scene. As a guy who shares both top and bottom bunks, I wonder what the Spartans would've made of me?! 'Entrepreneurial', one hopes.

The most famous Greek gay of them all, Alexander the Great, who conquered vast swathes of the Western and Eastern world, bore two children, had two wives but loved beyond measure his male lover Hephaestion, who he kept beside him until his premature death (think Colin Farrell). Then there were Achilles and Patroclus of Troy fame, penned by Homer. When Patroclus was killed by Hector, Achilles' anger knew no bounds. He killed the Trojan prince and destroyed the city of Troy in revenge for the death of his famous lover. Hollywood's Brad Pitt version omitted that fact. No surprise there! Whilst the story of Achilles is folklore, the tales of Greek male love have been passed down the centuries and reveal a lot about how cool those Greeks were regarding homosexuality. The gays were most certainly out and about thousands of years ago - and had it pretty damn good, it would seem!

Fast forward two thousand years or more, and one of the next notable queers is Richard the Lionheart of Robin Hood fame. Not only did Richard spend most of his time hot-footing it around Europe with a gaggle of hurly burly knights and crusading in the Middle East, he would also from time to time find himself tucked up in bed with



the King of France, Phillip II. Contemporaries accused the king of being part of 'the immense cohort of sinners'. Richard himself made confession and penance on two occasions, in 1191 and 1195, for the vice of sodomy. Richard's great great nephew, Edward II, who ruled England between 1307 and 1327, is perhaps the best known of the English kings in terms of homosexuality. His love for his male favourite and childhood companion, Piers Gaveston, knew no bounds. When Gaveston was murdered in 1312 at the hands of Edward's cousin, a chronicler of the time wrote, rather poetically, 'in the lament of David upon Jonathan, love is depicted which is said to have surpassed the love of women. Our king also spoke thus'.

Edward himself would later lose his throne - but not his life, as legend would have it, by being buggered to death with a red hot poker. This was a fanciful story told some 50 years later. We all enjoy a good yarn.

Of course, the list goes on and on; William III, Queen Anne, Oscar Wilde, Vita Sackville West - not to mention the queen's uncle, Prince George, Duke of Kent, who had a longstanding relationship with Noel Coward.

The point, therefore, is a simple one. We gays - men and women alike - have been in same-sex relationships as long as there have been people. Whilst the language and attitudes may have changed as the centuries have come and gone, we have continued to be, and always will be, that lager-drinking cockney's absolute worst nightmare.

And that, folks, is very definitely our trump card!

It's been a rough few weeks for lovely gay stuff in this country. The pre-election chatter has brought out some pretty nasty homophobia. One MP reportedly told a group of sixth formers that being gay was dangerous to society. Another refused to say that homosexuality was not a sin, before apparently publicly changing his mind.

Across the pond, I've discovered that there's a movement called #GaysForTrump. This has blown my mind. This is as unthinkable as Trump winning a presidential election. Oh, hang on... The world has definitely gone crazy - and not in a kooky Crazy Eyes way (I STILL find myself calling that programme Orange Is Not The Only Fruit - why the lesbian obsession with citrus fruit?).

So, I'm going to focus on something gorgeous for a change. It's what we deserve. Namely, there have been two lovely weddings...

Tom Daley married his boyfriend

Lance Black, and the photos were cuter than, well, cuter than Tom Daley on his own. Dressed in purple and blue suits, and with ridiculous smiles on their faces, it was impossible not to share their happiness.

And then Sheldon got in on the act! Well, no, of course we don't yet know if a Shamy wedding is going to happen, but the actor who plays the Big Bang Theory character, Jim Parsons, has just married the other love of his life, Todd Spiewak. Again, there was lots of gushing about how happy everyone was.

Call me a hopeless romantic, but statistically we can be pretty sure that at least one of these gorgeous, lovely, happy couplings is one day going to end in D-I-V-O-R-C-E, which does put a bit of a damper on proceedings. But hey, at least they'll be able to wear the suits again, something you can't say of wedding dresses.

It might have been this kind of thinking which prompted Sir Ian McKellen

(who's never been married or divorced, as far as I know) to announce recently that coming out is the best thing any gay person will ever do. I'm not so sure about that. Coming out, as far as I can remember, involved a lot of crying, a small amount of violence and some unfortunate name-calling. My memory of that experience is further marred by the horrible thought that I was probably wearing stone-washed jeans at the time

I imagine that Tom & Lance and Jim & Todd were all thinking that meeting their respective partners, or getting married, was the best thing they would ever do. And probably at least two of them, on some future date when the love has turned a little sour, will be thinking that getting a decree nisi is the best thing they've ever done. Coming out is just a necessary hurdle along the way.

Congratulations, Tom and Jim! May your adorable married lives last as long as they possibly can.

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Further information available
www.leicestersexualhealth.nhs.uk



You can also check out Trade Sexual Health:

www.tradesexualhealth.com



ON THE BALL

with
Steve Ball

A holocaust in the making

The Pride festival season is in full swing and Birmingham Pride 2017 was a great success. The summer has lots more Prides in store too, both here in the Midlands and across the UK.

The festivals provide a great opportunity to let down our hair, celebrate our identity and remind ourselves how far we've come in the last 20 years.

But let's stay mindful of the fact that not everybody can take for granted the rights that LGBT people enjoy here in the UK.

Take the southern Russian republic of Chechnya, for example, where Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov

planned to 'eliminate' the country's gay community by the start of Ramadan at the end of last month.

Gay men there are fleeing brutal persecution and - according to Svetlana Zakharova of the Russian LGBT Network - police are holding more than 100 people and torturing some of them in an anti-gay crackdown.

Victims - either gay or just perceived to be gay - are being held at a detention centre near Argun, 13 miles from the city of Grozny, where they are being tortured with electric shocks, beaten with cables and crammed more than 30 to a cell. At least three deaths have been reported.

Those not detained face pressure too, with families being encouraged to kill their gay relatives. There are claims that a gay 17-year-old died after his uncle pushed him from a ninth-floor flat in Chechnya. Local media reports stated that the family was told to "wash away the shame" of the teenager.

Foreign governments - including our own, the EU and the US, as well as human rights groups - have all voiced concern about the alleged abuses, urging the Russian and Chechen authorities to bring a halt to them.

There have been demonstrations in Birmingham and other UK cities to send a loud and resounding message that we will not sit by and tolerate the persecution of LGBTQ+ people.

But in a post-Brexit world, with Trump in the White House, nuclear tension in North Korea and continued atrocities in Syria, it's understandable that some news gets brushed under the carpet, with the persecution of gays on the other side of Europe featuring pretty low on the news agenda. But this is a holocaust in the making that we all need to pay attention to. Just because this is happening 3,000 miles away doesn't make it any less real.

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THE VIRAL ROUND-UP

Here's what we've been looking at online...

We all do it - spend hours on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Often, we're distracted from what we should be doing by cat videos and funny pranks - or by something feelgood that's been shared so much on the net it's officially classed as 'viral'. Well, here are some of Midlands Zone's favourites from the past month!



BIRMINGHAM PRIDE Carnival Parade kicks off the 2017 festival in style!

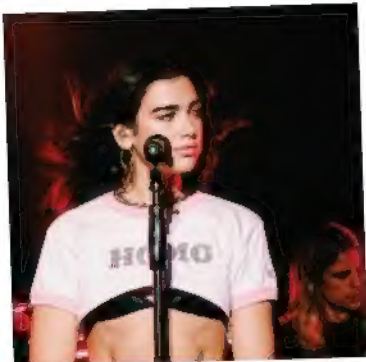
Hailed an amazing success, Birmingham Pride is over for another year - but boy, was it a blast!

As usual, the event kicked off with the Carnival Parade. This year boasting a record number of entries, it was one of the brightest, most colourful Brum Pride processions

we've ever seen - so much so that we could happily watch it again and again! That's why it's so great to see that the official Birmingham Pride carnival video over on Facebook has gained almost 250,000 views. If you haven't seen it yet, check it out at fb.com/BirminghamPride

CELEB SNAPS!

Our fave celeb Instagram snaps...



Dua Lipa looked incredible in her Homo tee at Birmingham Pride!



Calum Scott, joined by Matrix & Futurebound, LOVED Pride!



Raye was pouting with Pride in Birmingham last month!

GEORGE MICHAEL lip sync video message



A Polish couple who are YouTube vloggers have released a George Michael tribute video urging the Polish government to 'wake up' and allow same-sex couples to marry. They used a medley of the late singer's songs to show that 'Love is Love', and were joined in the video by other members of the Polish LGBT community. Check it out here:

youtu.be/dU1DG4lvQyY

A photograph of two men in a close embrace. The man in the foreground is shirtless, wearing a white tank top that is being pulled down by the other man. He has a red and black wristband on his left arm and blue and black shorts. The man behind him is also shirtless, wearing a black leather collar, and is kissing the first man on the cheek. The background is a plain grey.

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